The Myth of the Moderate Republican SAM TANENH

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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JUNE 11, 2001

Don't Blow It

Tom Daschle's Life Gets Harder
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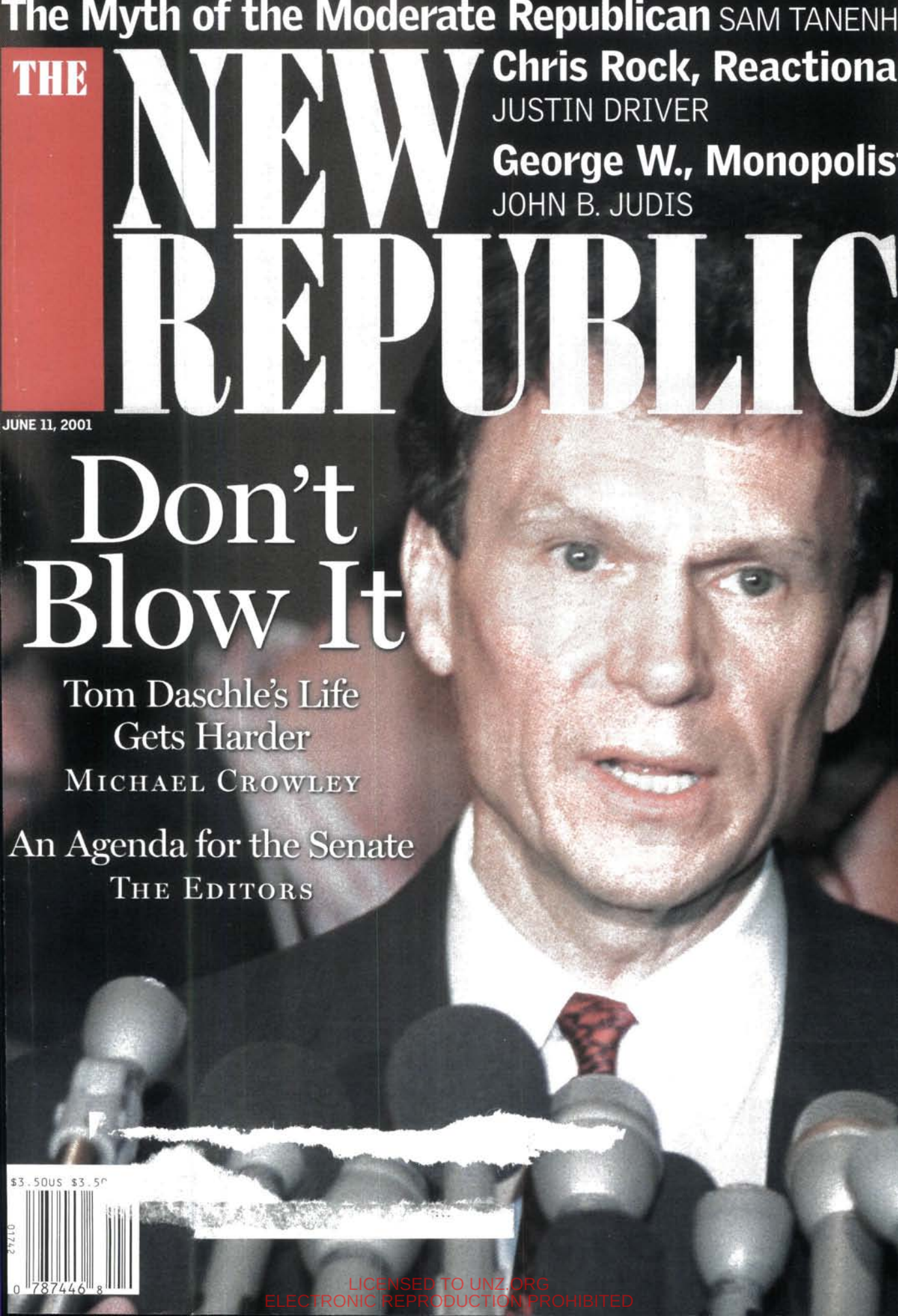
An Agenda for the Senate
THE EDITORS



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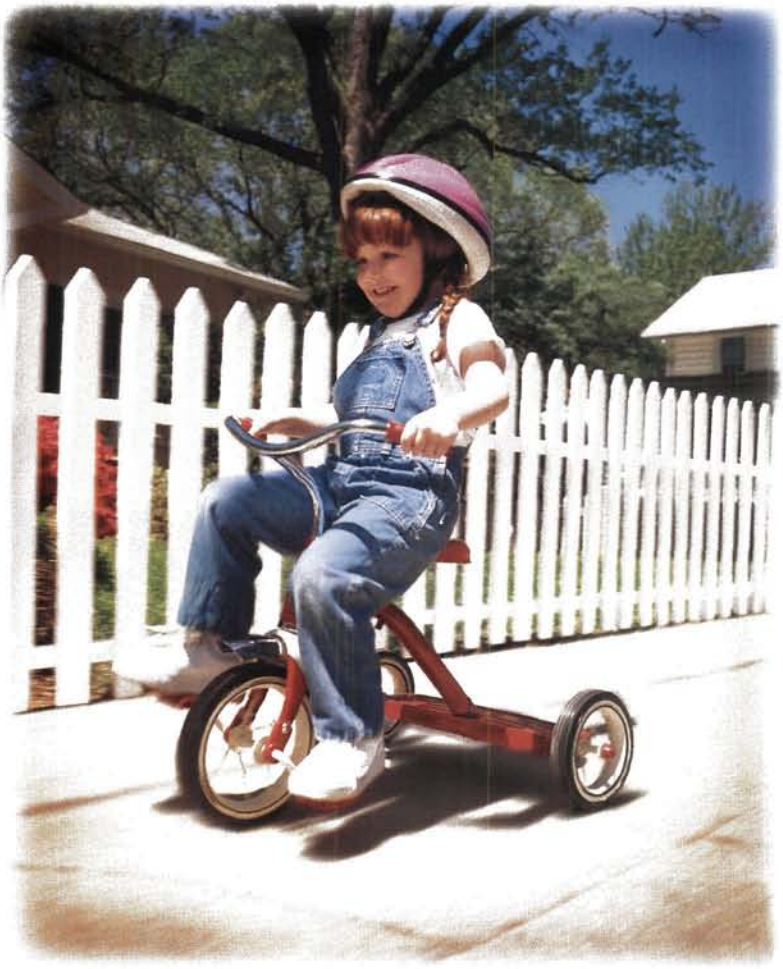

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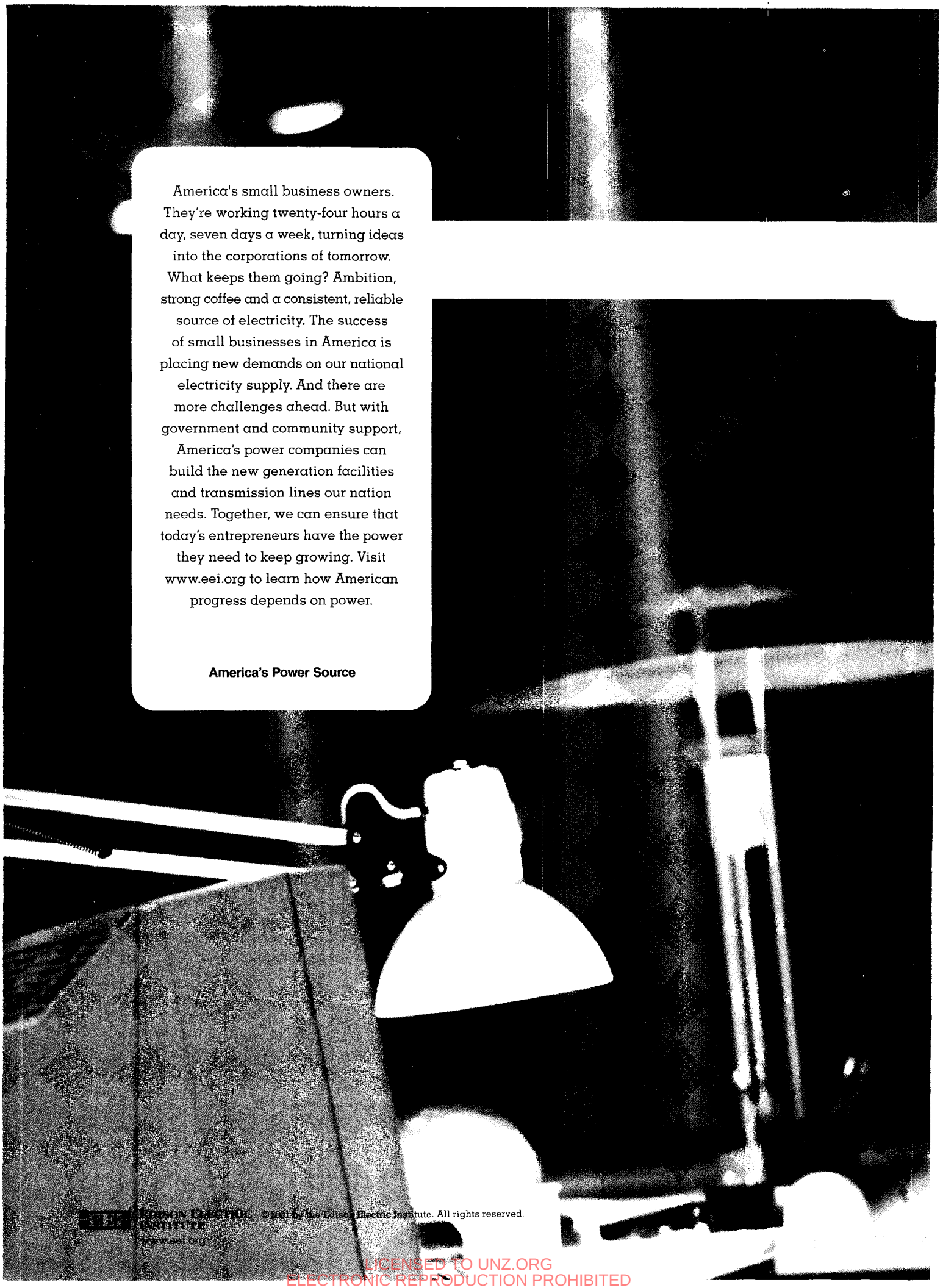

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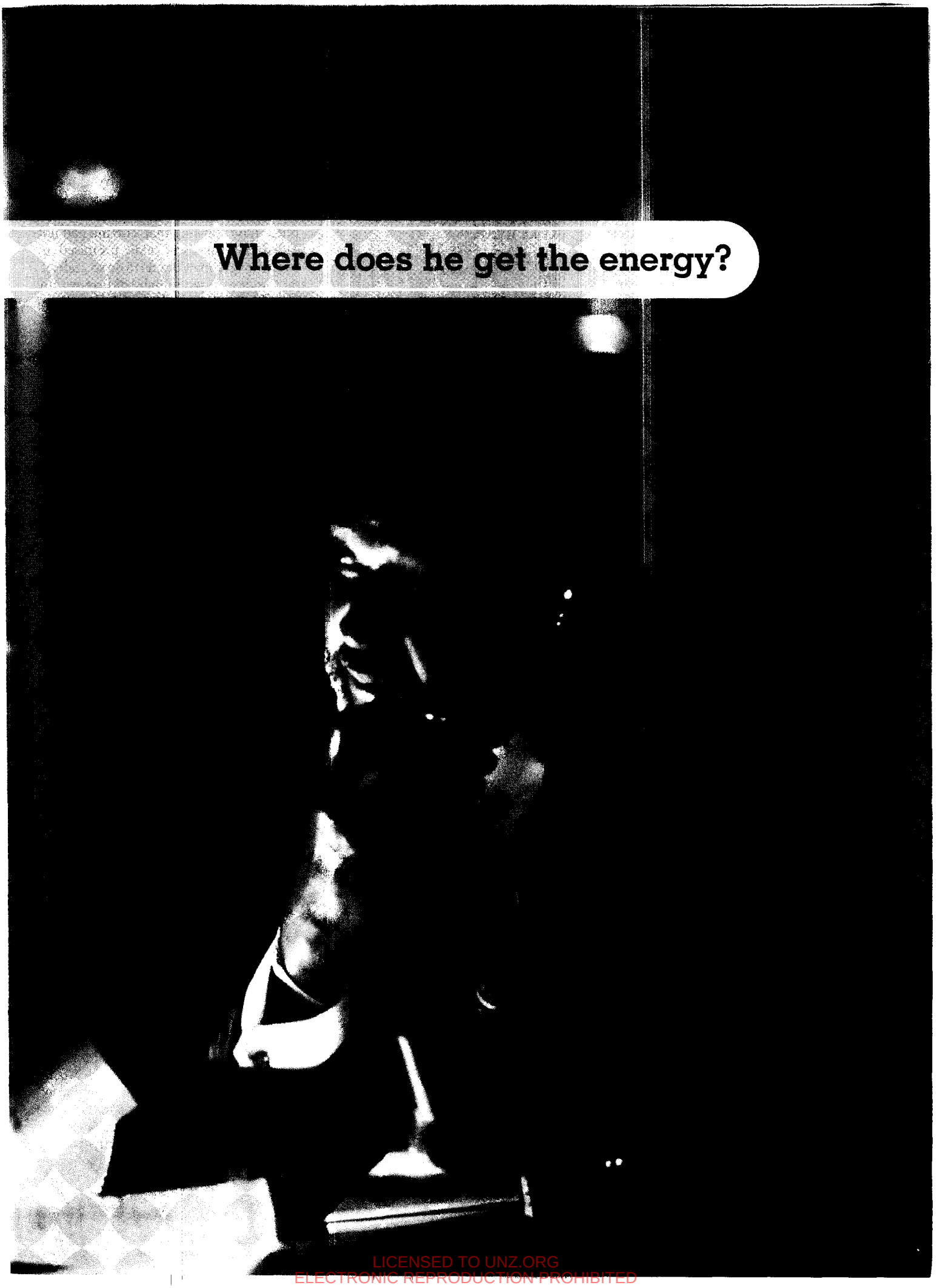

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CORRESPONDENCE

Call and response

TO THE EDITORS:

I was disappointed to read Jason Zengerle's article about my colleague Senator Bob Torricelli and am writing to clear up several misimpressions ("Clubbed," May 7). In my many years of dealing with Torricelli—as both a private citizen and a fellow senator—I have always known him to be an honest man. First and foremost, I refute Zengerle's implication that Torricelli does not have any friends in the Senate. Torricelli is my friend, and there are many others I know who feel similarly.

Second, I challenge Zengerle's assertion that fellow senators were reluctant to return his call and did so only after "who knows how much cajoling" by Torricelli or his staff. I returned Zengerle's call willingly and as speedily as I could, without "cajoling." In fact, Zengerle contacted me during the Easter recess—a two-week break when senators are either in their home states or on vacation. On the day Zengerle called my Washington office, I was taking a few days off with my family. My press secretary informed Zengerle that I would return his call as soon as I was back, and I did so the day I returned to New Jersey. I spent almost 20 minutes on the phone with Zengerle, who unfortunately did not include the many statements I made challenging his views concerning Torricelli's relationship with other senators. Unfortunately, it has become clear that Zengerle based his story on a preconceived premise. I do not appreciate his comments concerning my so-called reluctance to return his calls. There was no such reluctance.

I am proud to be Torricelli's partner in representing New Jersey in the U.S. Senate. He is a strong voice for New Jersey and for progressive principles and policies.

JON S. CORZINE
United States Senator
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITORS:

I feel compelled to take issue with Jason Zengerle's assessment that Senator Bob Torricelli has been abandoned by his Democratic colleagues in the Senate. In his story, Zengerle asserts that he spoke to my press secretary. In fact, he did not. He placed one call to our office, spoke to a receptionist, and then failed to follow up. Had he spoken to either my press secretary or to me, he would have heard a story different from the one he tells.

Torricelli has been and continues to be an active and engaged member of our caucus. He has made significant contributions to our national debate, and he continues to do so. Torricelli is now in a difficult position. His lawyers have advised him not to speak about the issue, and so he is practically prohibited from defending himself. He has said that, when the time comes, he will be able to answer all of the questions that have been raised, and I believe him. Contrary to the impression that may have been left by Zengerle's article, Torricelli enjoys my support and the support of his fellow Democrats.

The Rise and Fall of Bob Torricelli
THE NEW REPUBLIC
INTEGRATION BLUES
DID GENTRIFICATION CAUSE THE CINCINNATI RIOTS?
BY MICHELLE COTTLE

TOM DASCHLE
United States Senator
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITORS:

Before any rush to judgment on Senator Bob Torricelli, it is important to remember he has not been charged with anything—except by some in the press. Torricelli's effectiveness in the Senate is demonstrated to me every day as he negotiates for a tax policy that helps the people of New Jersey first.

In America, everyone should be presumed innocent, and, while some may criticize Torricelli's aggressiveness, the people of New Jersey can be proud of his determination to work on their behalf.

JOHN BREAUX
United States Senator
Washington, D.C.

JASON ZENGERLE REPLIES:

Write a story alleging that Senator Bob Torricelli has broken a host of campaign finance and ethics laws and is in jeopardy of being run out of office on a rail, and Democrats say nary a word. Write a story noting that silence, and all of a sudden Democrats—namely, those who were singled out for their reticence—rally to Torricelli's defense.

Senator Jon S. Corzine took a full week to call me back—and he did so after the original deadline I had given his press secretary. During that time, a Torricelli aide made several inquiries as to whether Corzine had returned my call, and each time, upon learning that Corzine had not called me back, the aide promised to "work on" getting Corzine to do so. Indeed, on the day Corzine finally did return my call, the Torricelli aide called me beforehand to give me a heads-up. As for the retelling of my conversation with Corzine, I quoted him commenting very positively on Torricelli's relationships with other senators. Evidently one quote, in his mind, was not enough.

Senator Tom Daschle says I spoke with a "receptionist" in his office. In fact, I called Daschle's press office directly; his press secretary was not in, so another person in his press office asked if she could help me. I explained why I was calling and left my interview request with her. If Daschle and his press secretary never received that request, as they now say, that's not my fault.

When I did not hear back from Daschle, I was not surprised, given his prior reluctance to speak about the Torricelli investigation. In February he declined to comment on it in response to a *Roll Call* reporter's question. And, on April 23, in his most extensive comments on the Torricelli matter prior to his letter responding to my article, he merely said: "Senator Torricelli has said that these allegations are completely false, and I have no reason not to believe him."

Skeleton

TO THE EDITORS:

Michelle Cottle's analysis of gentrification and the increase in aggressive police tactics as explanations for the Cincinnati riots is worthwhile ("Boomerang," May 7). Why has the nation's major media been relatively disengaged from the Cincinnati story? Perhaps our news gatekeepers did not want to admit the festering and unresolved issues with respect to strained race relations and the disproportionate number of African Americans stopped, questioned, arrested, charged, and convicted of crimes. Maybe the New York and Los Angeles media, which gave similarly lackluster coverage, feared drawing attention to their own cities' skeletons in the shape of Abner Louima, Amadou Diallo, and Rodney King. I hope the Cincinnati events prompt the media to keep the issues of racial profiling and disproportionate

continued on page 53

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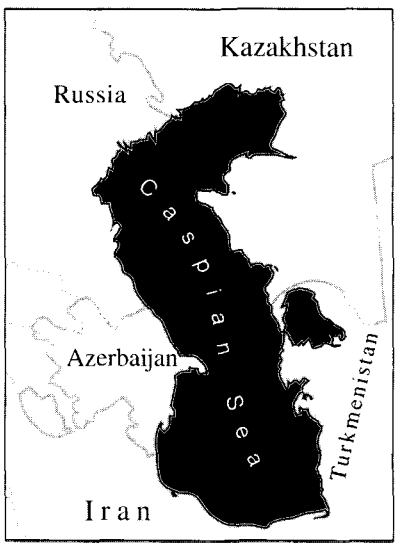
Adding to energy supplies

The emergence of the Caspian

Consumers and businesses in the United States and around the world have a strong interest in developing new energy supplies and in diversifying the source of those supplies. Oil demand is expected to rise almost 2 percent a year for many years, largely due to growth in the developing world. Private companies will have an important role in supplying that demand as they continue to search the world for new hydrocarbon resources.



One encouraging story is emerging in the Caspian Sea region. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union 10 years ago, this area has seen an intensive search for oil and gas. Now, this effort is entering an exciting new phase as exploration and development projects move into critical stages.

Two republics bordering the Caspian—Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan—have the combined potential to eventually produce several million barrels of oil per day. This would materially add to the amount and the diversity of world oil supplies. It would also offer the promise of beneficially transforming the countries that provide the energy. Achieving such production will require huge additional investments to overcome technical, commercial and environmental challenges. Investments are needed to drill wells and produce oil, to create new facilities for construction of oilfield equipment, and to build pipelines to transport oil ashore and to distant markets.

Azerbaijan has significant exploration potential in its offshore area. Initial production from the so-called Megastructure field has been exported via pipelines that run either through Russia or through Georgia. As production from this and other fields grows, and assuming further exploration success, additional export routes will be needed. The assessments of reserves and export options are complex, but governments and private companies are working hard to evaluate economic alternatives. In addition, substantial reserves of natural gas have been discovered, and these too will need an export outlet.

Oil developments in **Kazakhstan** are also very promising. Production from the world-class Tengiz field has been exported through complex arrangements. Later this year, completion of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium pipeline from Kazakhstan to a new export facility on the Black Sea will provide much expanded capacity at lower cost. Last summer, Kazakhstan also saw a world-class offshore discovery in the Kashagan field in the northeastern Caspian. Building on these discoveries, hopes are high for a major new oil province. This is an environmentally sensitive area with complex geology, but safe production is within the capabilities of international firms that possess widespread offshore and cold-weather experience.

How fast these many energy opportunities reach world markets will depend on the organizational and technological skill of companies and the cooperation of many governments and communities. The challenges are great, but the prospects are encouraging.

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

After Party

It was a coincidence that Massachusetts Representative Joe Moakley died just days after Vermont Senator Jim Jeffords capriciously handed the Senate to the Democrats. Moakley probably took pleasure in the news during his last days. He was exactly what Jeffords isn't: a party man through and through. "As soon as we're born," Moakley said in 1989, referring to the political culture in which he was raised, "we're baptized into the Catholic Church, we're sworn into the Democratic Party, and we're given union cards." Moakley saw his job as funneling vast quantities of other Americans' money into local projects that rewarded local supporters. He never apologized for taking the money of Arizonans and Texans and Californians to finance the digging of a huge tunnel through the heart of Boston. He repaid his party with unremitting docility. He had only one vaguely rebellious moment: In 1972, after losing the 1970 Democratic primary to an anti-busing candidate, Moakley ran as an independent in Boston's Ninth District. He nevertheless won the seat, and he promptly became a loyal Democrat again. In his long career, his main achievement was running the Rules Committee in the House of Representatives (with his close friend David Bonior) so as to exclude the Republicans from having any real influence. A partisan to his fingertips, he died a celebrated, revered, and popular man, singled out for praise by a Republican president in an address to Congress.

Then there's Jeffords. Some have characterized his departure from the GOP as an act of principle that has helped highlight the right-wing extremism of George W. Bush's fledgling presidency. In fact, this is wrong on both counts: George W. isn't particularly extreme, and Jeffords's action isn't particularly principled. Jeffords stayed in the Republican Party at moments over the past two decades when it was considerably more conservative than it is today. During Ronald Reagan's tax cut and through the height of the Gingrich non-revolution, Jeffords stuck with his party affiliation while voting consistently against almost everything it stood for. He was the anti-Moakley. And while Moakley benefited from being a plain-talking patronage pol, Jeffords burnished his craggy fickleness as the perfect expression of the quirky state he represented. It paid off in the media. Although many conservative outlets blasted him for treachery, most of the press lapped up the rebellion of this old Yankee Republican. He is, in many ways, as celebrated as Moakley—for exactly the opposite reason. Although both attempted to reflect their districts, they did so in strikingly different ways: one a good son of his party, the other a prodigal wayfarer.

Both types, I think, are overrated. At the point where it actually makes a difference, politics is not merely about lofty principles or yellow-dog partisanship. It's about the ability to balance the two. Sure, we need men and women who, when necessary, refuse to buckle to something they disagree with. But a stable party system is also indispensable if politics is to function. Parties, for all their faults, coordinate legislation, organize elections, create majorities for government, and on and on. The Republican who barely ever votes with his party is not a popular hero; he's a poseur. And the Democrat who barely ever questions his party's direction is not a great old pol; he's a sheep. Politics in its most constructive sense needs something more.

If you want to change your party, you do so by making arguments, organizing movements, doing what Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan did. To his credit, Moakley did this when he ran as an independent to protest the insurgent anti-busing line—only to join the party again once his point had been made. This blend of loyalty and disloyalty is what makes someone an effective advocate, and Moakley would have been a better politician if he had continued to hold those positions throughout his career. For all his maverick tendencies, I put John McCain in the category of loyal opposition. Most of his votes have been in the center of his party. But when he decided his party was wrong, he said so, campaigned for president on those issues, lost gracefully, and pioneered bipartisan legislation to put his ideas into practice. His vote against the tax cut is, I hope, not a sign that he is about to wander off the reservation altogether. The Republicans need him the same way Democrats need Georgia Senator Zell Miller. Miller is no traitor, but he's no Stepford Democrat either. He's loyal on many spending programs but queasy about the degeneration of the Democrats into the party of Terry McAuliffe. Who wouldn't be?

Jeffords did none of these things. He stuck with his party in 1994, a far more radical period. He voted for the single most conservative proposal advanced by Bush: the tax cut. His decision to quit now is transparently opportunistic, which is why one can understand some Republicans' anger. Quitting over the tax cut would have made sense. Quitting over an invitation to a teacher-of-the-year ceremony is mere pique. As for the notion that he is merely alerting the country to the most extreme administration in memory, the facts simply don't support that. Bush is pouring federal money into education and has surrendered on school choice. His environmental policies, as Gregg Easterbrook has demonstrated in these pages, are barely distinguishable from Bill Clinton's. John Ashcroft's Justice Department is enforcing civil rights as doggedly as Janet Reno's. There are more senior-level minorities around Bush than in any previous Republican administration. What gives?

The most forgiving explanation is Vermont. If Jeffords's liberal Republicanism was quirky two decades ago, you can see why Jeffords is in a pickle in today's Vermont. The state is sharply divided between longtime Vermonters and a large influx of liberal boomers. But it is clearly moving in a liberal direction, as its pioneering establishment of same-sex unions shows. A moderate Republican could easily get squeezed in such a polarized place, just as liberal Democrats have slowly been rendered extinct in the South. But the principled answer to that is not to quit party affiliation after a few months in office but to run as an independent in the first place. Had Jeffords done that, à la Moakley in 1972, he might well have won. And his stance as a brave man of principle would carry more weight.

The problem with this kind of calibration, of course, is that it doesn't make good copy. A public revolted by "politics as usual" has been taught to disdain the quieter virtues of loyalty and compromise in national politics. Street pols from Boston conjure up warmer, nostalgic images. Cranky, WASPy senators appeal to our romantic notion of politics as a series of quixotic crusades. But our politics needs fewer of these archetypes if it is to be effective, and less of this romanticism if it is to harness principles to the partisanship that can actually enforce them. In very different ways, think of Clinton and Reagan: two men who saw that imperfection is not the enemy of the good but its essential counterpart; party men who knew when to take the party with them and when reluctantly to leave it behind.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

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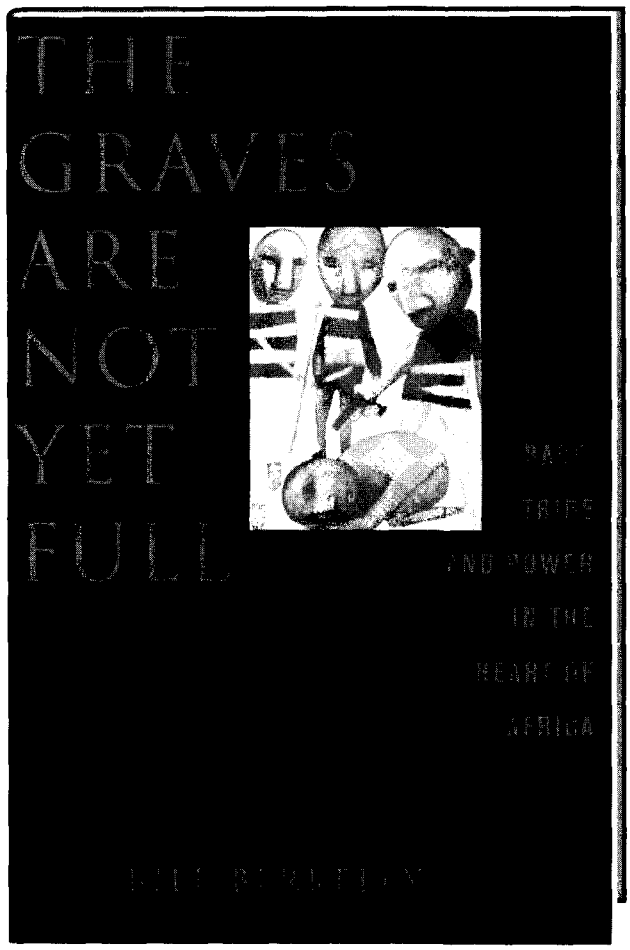

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BILL BERKELEY has been an editorial writer at *The New York Times* and for more than a decade reported on African affairs for *The Atlantic Monthly, The New Republic, The New York Times Magazine* and *The Washington Post.*

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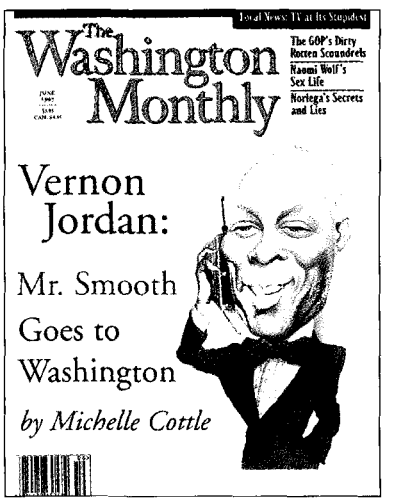

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Just Say No

JIM JEFFORDS'S DEFECTION from the GOP last week offered Democrats their first chance all year to lay out an agenda. Instead, the liberal establishment called for bipartisanship. "It will not be easy to reinstill the atmosphere of cooperation in Washington," said the *New York Times* editorial page, according to which cooperation between the parties is always a good in itself. The White House was happy to echo the Gray Lady's call: On Thursday, May 24, the day after Jeffords bolted, White House spokesman Ari Fleischer declared, "They can't just obstruct. And that will be a real test for the incoming Democrat[ic] leadership." And within three days White House Chief of Staff Andy Card had declared that the Democrats had failed. "It sounds to me," said Card, "like [soon-to-be-Majority Leader Tom Daschle] doesn't have an agenda other than an agenda of 'no.'"

To which we say: Hooray. In fact, "an agenda of 'no'" is exactly what the Senate Democrats need. Ever since Bush took office, his administration has made it absolutely clear that it has no intention of deviating significantly from the conservative agenda against which a majority of Americans voted last fall. And that means there is only one kind of bipartisanship on offer in George W.'s Washington: the bipartisanship of a lockstep congressional GOP and a few conservative Democrats like John Breaux whom no one ever accused of entering politics out of a passion for social justice. Kentucky Republican Jim Bunning has been frank enough to explain how the White House's grand vision of a bipartisan Senate will work: Democrats "will have to be center-right because we have a president who is more right than center, and they will have to come toward him to govern or do nothing."

Faced with this alternative, doing nothing is a worthy goal. And, through a policy of principled obstruction, there are several ways Senate Democrats can ensure that nothing is done. First, they shouldn't try to salvage the Bush administration's energy plan by excising its worst aspects and adding a token conservation measure or two. As Gregg Easterbrook explained in these pages last week, there is no energy crisis, and America has no need for a national energy plan—particularly one that ignores global warming and proposes that taxpayers subsidize SUVs. Good policy and good politics both suggest that Democrats try to turn the energy plan into the Bush administration's version of Hillarycare. They should make it not simply a defeat but an absolute, defining one.

But principled obstructionism doesn't mean only sabotaging Bush administration initiatives. It also means proposing stark alternatives—and forcing them to the Senate floor (and maybe even to the president's desk) so Republicans will be on record opposing them. Unfortunately, several of the issues atop Daschle's list aren't worth fighting for. The Senate Democratic leadership wants a hike in the minimum wage. But to demand one as the economy heads into a downturn verges on economic illiteracy. Besides, Republicans have clearly decided that, instead of fighting a minimum-wage hike, they will lard it up with indefensible tax giveaways for businesses, which would make the bill even less defensible and strip it of any political benefit. The patients' bill of rights, that creature of Democratic focus groups, is largely cosmetic—and hardly worth making the centerpiece of the party's anti-Bush agenda. And a prescription-drug benefit for Medicare, while obviously preferable to a huge tax cut, continues the Democratic Party's unfortunate trend toward redistributing wealth not from rich to poor but from young to old.

In fact, the truly neglected Americans are children, an appalling percentage of whom live not only without prescription drugs but without any health insurance at all. Why not make children's health care, an issue about which Bush has shown utter ignorance and indifference throughout his career, the Senate Democrats' central crusade? Perhaps throw in the full funding of Head Start and call it a children's bill of rights.

Would such an agenda pass? No, but that's exactly the point. After six months, surely it's clear that, for Democrats, accommodating this White House is the path to oblivion. In public, Daschle may need to echo the media's clichés about compromise and conciliation. But his real goal should be to dismantle the president's benevolent public image and to lay out an agenda upon which the Democratic Party can retake power one day soon. ■

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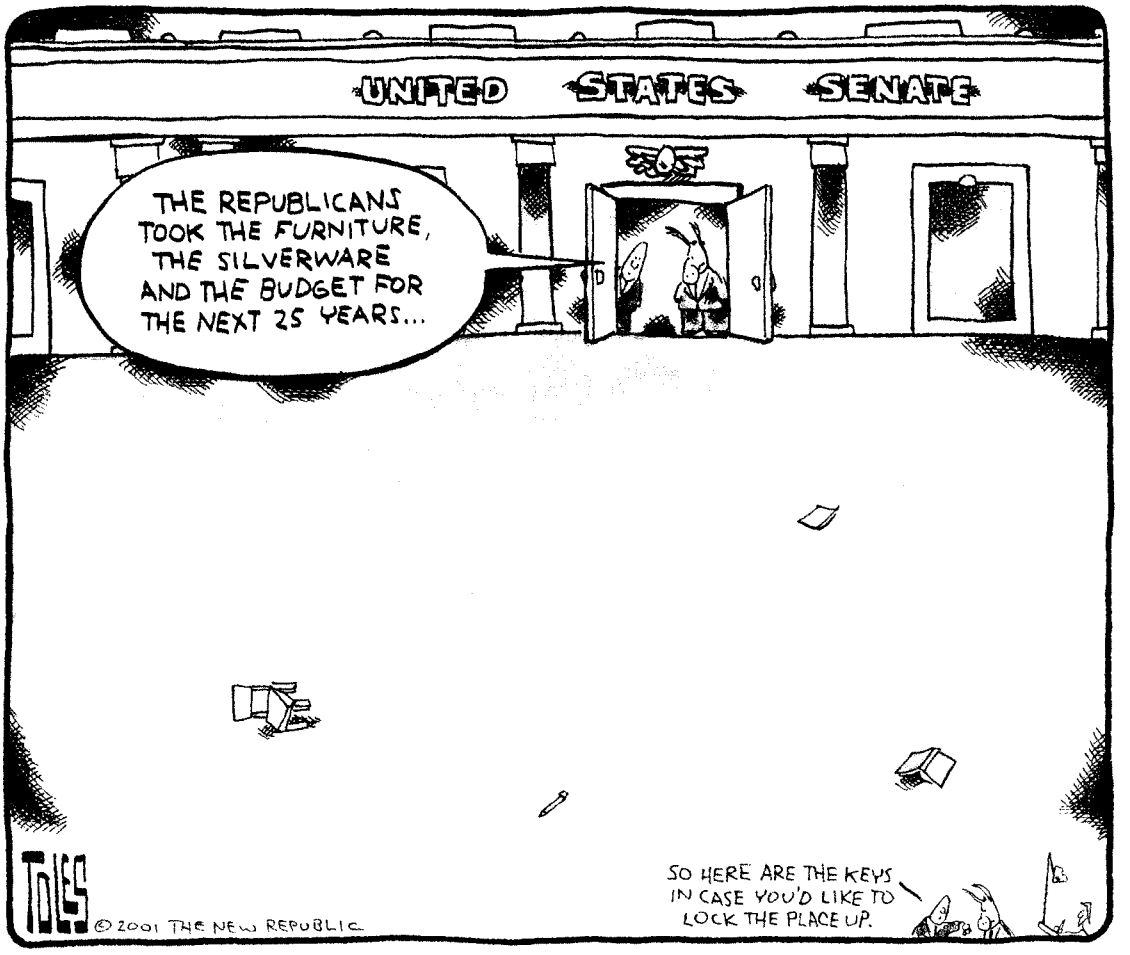
NOTEBOOK

COMPASSION FATIGUE: Ah, the days of George W. Bush, "new" Republican. Remember W.'s much-hyped plan to rally the "armies of compassion" by extending the charitable deduction to every taxpayer rather than just itemizers, as the tax code now allows? Back in the kinder, gentler days of 1999, then-candidate Bush declared, "We will encourage an outpouring of giving in America, encouraging giving by everyone in our society, not just the wealthy." Rolling out the president's economic blueprint at a White House press conference in February, Bush economics guru Larry Lindsey gushed, "We think that's an important part of solving America's social problems: not just giving it [the deduction] to roughly the thirty-three percent richest taxpayers, but to all taxpayers." The deduction also provided the White House with a rebuttal to critics who noted that the administration's plan to abolish the estate tax would likely result in less charitable giving. As Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill told a congressional committee, "The president has said we should allow people who don't file a long return to claim deductions or credits for their charitable giving, and I think that cuts the other way." Fast-forward to this week, when Bush finalized his $1.35 trillion tax cut, abolishing the estate tax in 2010. Was the charitable-deduction provision included in the legislation? Nope. But don't worry, says the White House: Bush will fight for it in the future. "The president believes it fits well and moves nicely with the faith initiative," press secretary Ari Fleischer told *The Washington Post*. The operative term, we can only presume, is "faith."

PROPERTY AS THEFT: Speaking of the estate tax: It's been widely reported that one of the main accounting tricks used to hide the true budget impact of Bush's $1.35 trillion tax cut is delaying full repeal of the estate tax until 2010—just before the ten-year budget figures end. But there's another estate tax accounting trick that hasn't gotten much attention—and it's even more nefarious. Basically, the feds will steal money from the states. Until now, the federal government has passed along a share of its estate tax revenues to state treasuries. But starting in 2002 that share will be reduced, and by 2005 it will be eliminated altogether. The federal government thereby gets extra money to hide the true cost of the Bush tax cut; the taxpayer gets nothing; and the states get robbed. How badly? According to *Kiplinger's Personal Finance Magazine*, last year California collected $937 million in estate tax revenue from the feds, Florida netted $779 million, New York picked up $450 million, and Texas got $249 million. Even in a small state like New Hampshire, which took in a mere $25 million, that still accounts for about 2 percent of its annual revenue. The National Governors' Association, which lobbied hard against the provision cutting states' shares, estimates that the states will lose $50 billion to $100 billion in revenue over the next ten years. So much for the party of states' rights.

DIRTY WORK: American agriculture—and, to an extent, the American economy—depends on a steady supply of migrant labor willing to do the low-paying, manual work that few Americans will do themselves. That's one good reason U.S. law gives these noncitizen workers certain basic rights: to a minimum wage, to safe working conditions, and so on. But those rights are meaningless unless the courts enforce them. And now Virginia's business lobby has hit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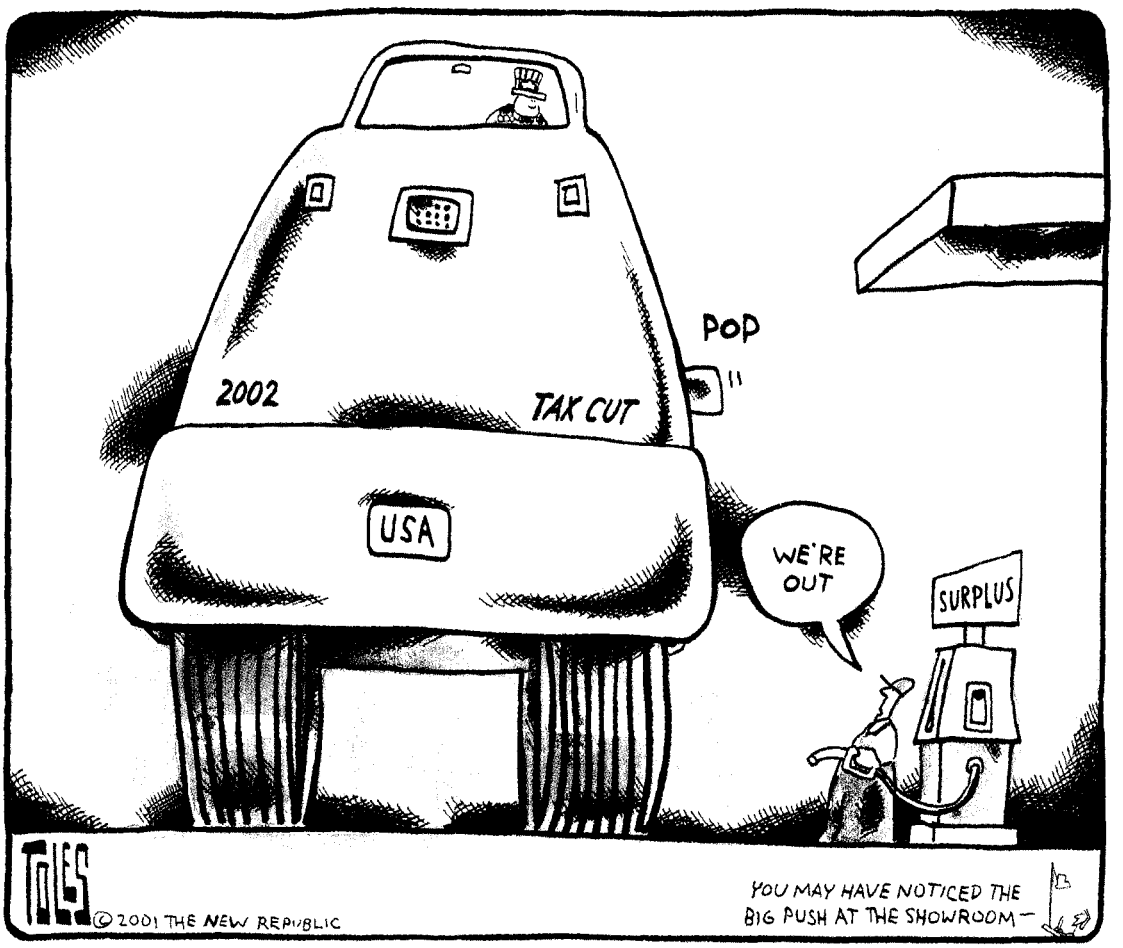
upon an ingenious way to make sure they don't: depriving migrant workers of lawyers. As a recent story in the *Los Angeles Times* detailed, business-friendly lawmakers in the state legislature recently issued an ultimatum to Virginia's Legal Services Corporation: If Legal Services didn't stop representing noncitizens, the legislature would pass a highly restrictive measure preventing the group from doing its most basic work, such as filing class-action suits on behalf of clients. Reluctantly, Legal Services complied. The measure's chief promoters—the Virginia Farm Bureau and the Virginia Seafood Council—accuse Legal Services lawyers of launching frivolous lawsuits and conducting a "shakedown" of employers. In fact, the evidence suggests they have been doing just what they are supposed to do: Since Virginia began its program four years ago (in response to new restrictions on federally funded legal assistance), Legal Services has collected $500,000 in back pay and overtime on behalf of clients—targeting companies that failed to pay minimum wage, housed workers in unsafe conditions, or, in one memorable case, issued paychecks with "void" written in the corner. (The Spanish-speaking workers didn't realize the checks were invalid until it was too late.) And, for all the talk of frivolous lawsuits, not one migrant-worker case brought by Legal Services during that time period was thrown out by a judge. Of course, for the farm and seafood lobby, that was exactly the problem.

KILL THE COURIER: Ever since the *Louisville Courier-Journal* began following up on our investigation of Mitch McConnell's connections with China (see "Sullied Heritage," by John B. Judis, April 23), the Kentucky senator has conducted a one-man crusade against his home-state paper. First he accused it of an "outbreak of yellow fever" and "subtle racism." Now McConnell is taking his message directly to the people. According to *The Weekly Standard*, McConnell attended the *Courier-Journal*'s country barbecue on the day of the Kentucky Derby, where he and his wife, Labor Secretary Elaine Chao, handed out laminated cards bearing faux *Courier-Journal* headlines such as "MCCONNELL HAS SECRET MEETINGS WITH CHINESE PANDAS" and "MCCONNELL AND CHAO SPOTTED AT CHINESE RESTAURANT USING CHOPSTICKS." Then, this week, the senator released a GOP-funded poll of 601 Kentucky respondents showing that more than half believed the paper's editorials to be generally liberal. McConnell—who has not, to date, challenged a single fact in the *Courier-Journal* pieces (or ours)—happily declared the paper "out-of-touch and irrelevant." Nervous, Mitch?

THE NEW, NEW THING: "A 'NEW' SHARPTON: MATURING OF A MAVERICK?"—*The New York Times*, January 21, 1991

"THE REFORMATION OF A STREET PREACHER"—*The New York Times Magazine*, January 24, 1993



"THE POST-SHARPTON SHARPTON"—*The New York Times Magazine*, March 18, 2001

AN ISSUE FOR ALL SEASONS: Careful adherents to the Roman calendar may have noticed that last week's "Special Spring Books" issue appeared more than two months into spring. TNR bibliophiles may have further remembered that at this time of year we customarily publish a "Summer Books" issue. And, indeed, we would have done so again this year except for the editors' regrettable typo. We apologize for the error. ■

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Amman Dispatch

Fire Next Door

By Joshua Hammer

David Ben-Tsvi doesn't venture onto the streets of Amman anymore. Ben-Tsvi (a pseudonym) is a veteran diplomat at the Israeli Embassy in Amman, a white villa perched on a hilltop in the quiet residential neighborhood of Rabia. Quiet, that is, until the Al-Aqsa intifada broke out last fall. What began as an exciting opportunity for Ben-Tsvi to build bridges with a former enemy has now turned into a game of survival. First, in October, there were angry demonstrations outside the embassy, during which protesters overturned cars and burned Israeli flags. Then, in November, a fellow Israeli diplomat was nearly killed by gunmen as he got into his car. On December 5 another Israeli diplomat was shot in the leg and seriously wounded, prompting the Israeli government to evacuate all dependents of embassy staff. Now Ben-Tsvi spends his days hunkered down inside the heavily guarded building; at night he watches television in his apartment, mourning the days when he could walk through Amman's *souk* as easily as he could stroll along Allenby Street in Tel Aviv. Says Ben Tsvi: "We're living under siege."

Israeli diplomats aren't the only ones in Jordan feeling the heat. As the Al-Aqsa intifada enters its ninth month, the fighting in neighboring Israel has scared away investors, wiped out tourism, sent unemployment soaring to 27 percent, and sparked unrest in the capital. The kingdom's Palestinians, said to make up 60 percent of the population, are frustrated and angry; the radical, fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood, a Sunni Muslim group with a branch in Jordan, has vowed revenge on the "Zionist entity." All of which leaves Abdullah II—the young monarch who is trying to modernize the Hashemite Kingdom while keeping a fragile peace with Israel—in a precarious position. "It's been a nightmare for the king," says a Western diplomat in Amman.

Abdullah's main worry is that the growing pressure to abrogate the peace treaty signed by his father in 1994 could spill into massive protests, bloodshed, and resentment of the monarch as a stooge of both Israel and the United States. And while anger at Israel has partially bridged the historic divide between Palestinians and Jordanians, the fighting across the Jordan River has opened up a new, potentially dangerous gulf—between middle-class Jordanians who want to preserve calm and their poorer countrymen who want the Hashemite Kingdom to join the fray. The king also worries that Fatah guerrillas, along with Hamas terrorists and other West Bank militants, will seek sanctuary in Jordan as the Israeli military turns up the heat. "Jordan doesn't want to become a base for Palestinian terror, as it did in the 1960s," one Amman political analyst told me.

Things looked much more hopeful two years ago, when the dying King Hussein surprised his subjects by passing over his brother, Prince Hassan, to name his son as his heir. Educated at Sandhurst Military Academy and Oxford, Abdullah won over his countrymen with his accessibility, his clandestine visits to government hospitals to investigate reports of corruption, and his vow to build a "new Jordan" that would be part of the global economy. Abdullah mingled with Bill Gates at the Global Economic Forum in Davos and wooed potential investors from numerous other high-tech firms. He also hatched ambitious plans for his jewel in the crown: the Aqaba Special Economic Zone, a tax-free haven that would transform the sleepy Red Sea port into a miniature Dubai. "Jordan has no water, it produces nothing," a Western diplomat in Amman told me. "Its only resource is well-educated people, and Abdullah really promoted that."

But the violence in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has forced the king to change his priorities. Even before the intifada, many Jordanians were grumbling that the peace deal with Israel had failed to bring them the expected benefits—more trade with the West Bank and more investment from Western Europe and the United States. Now that discontent is threatening to boil over. Eager to show his pro-Palestinian credentials, Abdullah has donated blood to victims of Israeli gunfire; recently he had an injured infant girl transported from the West Bank to Jordan to be treated at his personal expense. But, at the same time, Abdullah believes that giving the radical Israel-haters the upper hand would be disastrous for Jordan. In May, when the Muslim Brotherhood called a march to commemorate Al-Nakba, or "the catastrophe"—the anniversary of the founding of the Israeli state—the government cracked down hard, afraid that the march would turn into an anti-government protest and possibly lead to violence, as similar demonstrations did in October. Police attacked marchers with clubs and dogs. But leaders of the Islamic group vowed not be cowed. "We will always express our opinions," Dr. Abdel Majeed Al-Thneibat, chairman of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, told me. "We will always maintain the pressure to stop normalizing with the Jews."

For the moment, Abdullah's government is resisting the pressure. The Allenby Bridge across the Jordan River is still open, although few Israelis dare to set foot inside Jordan these days. Unlike Arab countries like Lebanon or Iraq, Jordan doesn't regard everyone who has an Israeli connection as a suspected spy. When I checked into the Hotel Intercontinental in Amman, I dutifully recorded my home address as "Jerusalem, Israel"—something I'd never dare anywhere else in the Arab world. (The address later appeared on my bill rewritten as "Jerusalem, Palestine.") But it's impossible not to sense the growing hatred of Israel. Jordan's newspapers publish virulently anti-Israel editorials and cartoons—one recently portrayed Ariel Sharon as an anthropomorphic tank adorned with swastika shoulder patches. Another newspaper, partly owned by the government, circulated a flyer a couple of weeks ago with a grisly photograph of a Palestinian baby killed in an Israeli mortar attack in Gaza. Beneath it ran the legend: "The people who murdered the Prophet [Jesus]

Joshua Hammer is Jerusalem bureau chief for *Newsweek* and author of *Chosen by God: A Brother's Journey*.

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Whither Tax Reform?

Alvin Rabushka is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and coauthor, with Robert E. Hall, of *The Flat Tax.*

Every year, American taxpayers face the mid-April ritual of filing their federal income tax returns with dread. The year 2001 was no different. Is relief on the way?

President George W. Bush pushed hard for $1.6 trillion in tax relief over the next ten years. Congress approved a smaller number, closer to $1.3 trillion. His plan will lower marginal tax rates, ease the marriage penalty, and perhaps lower estate taxes. Even if his plan is adopted in full, it will not simplify the tax code.

In 1981, Professor Robert E. Hall and I proposed a flat tax for the United States. The forms were so simple that tax returns could be filed on a postcard. The idea was popular in the early 1980s and again in the mid-1990s. Special interests and opponents of low tax rates, however, blocked its adoption.

The flat tax has met success in unlikely quarters. On January 1, 1994, Estonia, a postcommunist transition economy, implemented a 26 percent flat tax. Latvia followed with a 25 percent flat tax a year later. Croatia followed with a tax reform that embodies the core features of the flat tax. All of them have worked well in practice.

The most dramatic story took place in Russia. Under its new president, Vladimir Putin, Russia implemented a 13 percent flat tax beginning January 1, 2001. It replaced a three-bracket personal income tax system that had a top rate of 30 percent but which few wealthy Russians paid.

How has this 13 percent flat tax worked? In remarks at the Ministry of Finance on April 16, 2001, President Putin reported that income tax revenues for the first quarter of this year were running 62 percent ahead of last year at this time and ahead of earlier projections due, in large measure, to the new 13 percent flat tax. President Putin has repeatedly pointed to the 13 percent flat tax as one of the key policy achievements of his new government. (Details can be found at www.russiaeconomy.org.)

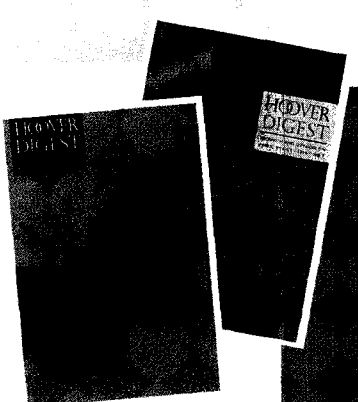
Three Polish political parties plan to introduce a flat tax in the Polish legislature in the next few years. The Chinese Taxpayer Press, the leading publisher of tax books in China, has inquired about translation rights for *The Flat Tax* (Hoover Press).

It is important to reduce tax burdens and marginal tax rates. But **the Bush plan, even after its full enactment, will still leave the incredibly complicated nightmare of the federal income tax largely in place,** burdened with deductions, exemptions, credits, the alternative minimum tax, and other absurdities that require professional tax advice and help with preparation of returns.

Let us hope that, once President Bush can claim victory for his tax cut, he will turn his attention to real tax reform in the coming years, emulating President Putin's bold vision of a low, simple, flat tax.

— *Alvin Rabushka*

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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are now murdering the children."

Such vitriol finds a receptive audience in the Palestinian refugee camps scattered across this arid, hilly capital. In Wihdaf, a teeming quarter of one-story huts populated by the families of Palestinians who fled across the Jordan River in 1948, I met Hosam Mahmoud, a 27-year-old canteen worker whose father fled Jaffa the day Israel declared itself a state. Lambasting Sharon as a "Nazi criminal," Mahmoud said he had attempted to join the anti-Israel march on Al-Nakba's anniversary but was summoned to police headquarters beforehand, along with hundreds of other young men, and placed in preventive detention. "What is the king so afraid of?" he asked.

Indeed, even as Abdullah tries to crack down on anti-Israel protesters, the intifada has clearly diminished his stature. Western diplomats regard him as intelligent but powerless; his recent, hapless Mideast peace initiative, which he co-sponsored with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, merely illustrated how little influence Abdullah wields over events next door. Many Jordanians compare him unfavorably with his late father, a masterful politician who would sit in the tents of village elders for hours, sipping coffee and talking about their problems. "There's a feeling of vacuum," one Western diplomat told me.

One recent evening in Amman, friends took me to a popular dinner theater in the affluent Sixth Circle neighborhood. I sat in a smoke-filled cavern with members of the Jordanian elite who watched a comedy troupe poke fun at the government's slick advertising campaign urging Jordanians to "[t]hink big," the corruption said to blight Abdullah's Cabinet, and his less-than-perfect Arabic. The laughter wasn't harsh, but it was unmistakably at the king's expense. ■

Christianity gets easy.

Indulgences

By Michelle Cottle

Forget *The Producers*. This year's hottest cultural phenomenon is a 92-page book based on the fortunes of a heretofore little-known Old Testament figure named Jabez. Until recently, Jabez's name would have elicited blank stares from even the most religiously devout. But today the guy is everywhere—coffee mugs, checkbook covers, the front page of *The New York Times*—thanks to a spirit-filled minister in Atlanta, Georgia, who plucked Jabez from obscurity and cast him as the hero of what has become a nationwide best-seller. Since November, *The Prayer of Jabez* has sold 4.5 million copies, zooming to the top of myriad best-seller lists, including Amazon.com, *The New York Times* miscellaneous, *The Wall Street Journal* nonfiction, *USA Today* nonfiction, and *Publisher's Weekly* nonfiction. The book is sweeping the halls of government as well: It has been quoted in House committee hearings; the entire Idaho Senate received gift copies from the state chaplain; and in May its author, Bruce Wilkinson, was invited to meet George W. Bush as part of the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the National Day of Prayer.

Critics dismiss *The Prayer of Jabez* as just another self-help book, a kind of *Seven Habits of Highly Blessed People* that reduces religion's great insights to six easy-to-follow steps. But it's actually more feeble than that. The real genius of *Jabez* is that, in many ways, it is the ultimate anti-self-help book. Yes, Wilkinson lifts themes and language from empowerment gurus and success coaches, but his central point is that there is *no* inner power or strength that we must struggle to tap. The key to success in life—material as well as spiritual—is simply to give it all up to God. Talent doesn't matter. (God has always preferred the weak.) Confidence doesn't matter. (The Father loves dependence.) Setting goals is in fact a sin. (It's all about God's will.) In an age worn thin by its obsession with "personal responsibility," Wilkinson gives us a blueprint for being good—even godly—even as he relieves us from the risk, pressure, and guilt that go along with personal responsibility. Then he guarantees immediate results. Thus, it may be that the Jabez craze is driven not so much by our insatiable desire to be richer, thinner, more significant—but by our exhaustion in the effort. It's why liposuction replaced aerobics and why we all bought into the idea that the cyberboom would make us rich without our really trying. In this sense, *The Prayer of Jabez* is the perfect representation of our time—and, come to think of it, of our current president.

Wilkinson's book takes its name from 1 Chronicles 4:9-10, in which an ordinary guy, named Jabez because "his mother bore him in pain," beseeches the Lord: "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!" God grants his request. From this brief passage, Wilkinson crafts an easy, breezy, unflaggingly upbeat lesson detailing both how virtuous and, more importantly, how simple it is to call down the Lord's blessings on oneself. Anyone can do it, he avers, noting that although Jabez asked for more property, his prayer applies just as well to the new economy. "If Jabez had worked on Wall Street, he might have prayed, 'Lord, increase the value of my investment portfolios.' "

And fatter portfolios are exactly what many of the book's devotees seem to expect. On *www.prayerofjabez.com*, one satisfied customer writes: "Today, which is Monday, I [*sic*] was blessed with a pair of diamond and sapphire earrings to match my necklace that I was wearing! God is so awesome!" Another cheers: "ON DAY TWO, I CLOSED A FOUR-THOUSAND DOLLAR DEAL IN LESS THAN AN HOUR." Others claim the prayer has brought them less material rewards: The site includes story after story from folks who miraculously fell in love, adopted a child, conquered disease, survived a car crash, or were sprung from prison.

But the promise of wealth and happiness can't by itself account for *Jabez*'s success—after all, life systems promising that are a dime a dozen. The difference is most self-help guides demand that people, well, help themselves. (Even the Reverend Ike's notorious 1970s prosperity theology said you wouldn't succeed unless you altered your behavior somewhat—by donating liberally to the Reverend Ike.) Sure, self-

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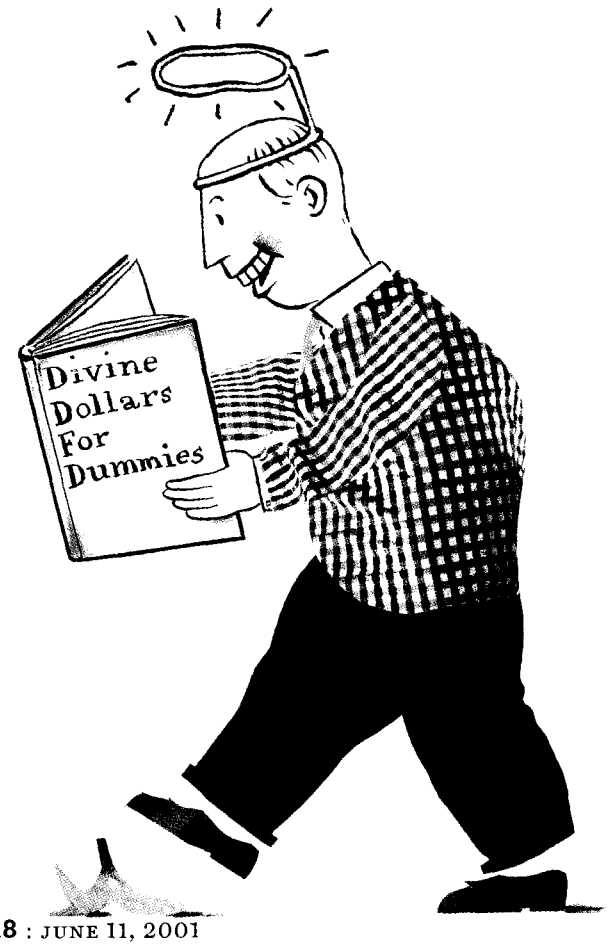
help allows you to blame some of your neuroses on repressed childhood trauma or undemonstrative parents, but fundamentally you are expected to get your act together, overcome your insecurities, and reach for greatness. *Jabez* doesn't demand any of that. "Because for the Christian," writes Wilkinson, "dependence is just another word for power."

In his seminars, empowerment guru Tony Robbins has the crowd chant: "I am the voice! I will lead, not follow.... Step up! Step up! Step up!" Similarly, success coach Stephen Covey tells us that we need to set goals, to "Begin With the End in Mind." Want a raise, a promotion, or a partnership this year? Robbins demands that, like an athlete in training, you condition your mind for peak performance. *Jabez*, by contrast, spares us the stress of trying to "lead" or be "the voice." And having a specific plan, Wilkinson avers, is actually a *bad* thing. Remember, Jabez "left it entirely up to God to decide what the blessings would be and where, when, and how Jabez would receive them." Just sit back, pray the prayer daily (and earnestly)—and wait for God to steer interesting people and opportunities your way. After 30 days, promises Wilkinson, "you'll be noticing significant changes." As for struggling to overcome self-doubt, don't sweat it: "You and I are always only one plea away from inexplicable, Spirit-enabled exploits. By His touch you can experience supernatural enthusiasm, boldness, and power."

Here, then, we see why President Bush's invitation to Wilkinson was so apt. W. is the classic *Jabez* success story. As a young man he had no plans—in fact, he never gave much thought to where his life was going. Yet he retained a vague sense that he deserved good things—that, especially during his days as a failed oilman, he was "born to more than this." Neither did he believe that one of God's children should labor for his goals at the expense of life's little pleasures. (People who sacrifice to "get what they want" are what *Jabez* derisively terms "a living sacrifice.") Wilkinson writes: "I've noticed that winning honor nearly always means leaving mediocre expectations and comfortable assumptions behind. But in this case [receiving Jabez-like blessings] has very little to do with talent." President Bush has lived this message. Heck, with that kind of tribute to the prayer's effectiveness, Wilkinson may wind up the best-selling author of all time. ■

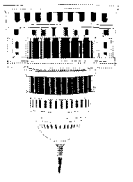


White House Watch

Tough Luck

By Ryan Lizza

Jim Jeffords's departure from the GOP was dramatic enough. But, in a sense, what has happened since has been even more remarkable: an orgy of Republican criticism of the White House's hardball tactics and the president's breezy style. Consider this warning from Republican Senator Chuck Hagel of Nebraska: "We don't mau-mau our own people when we think that they have somehow desecrated the Republican credo. And we can't be a governing party if we do that.... And if you're going to engage them as president of the United States, you've got to do better than just a cursory kind of—call them in and give them a nickname and slap them on the back.... That's why I say this isn't like Austin. The state legislature in Austin meets once every two years. And they are in for a couple of months. This is a twelve-month career deal around here. This is big-time stuff here. Again, the president is certainly capable of doing this. It's a matter of whether he can discipline himself and really put the time into this to do it." And Hagel is considered a White House ally.



The Senate Flips

In truth, the recriminations have been a long time coming. Subsequent denials notwithstanding, few in the congressional GOP believe the White House didn't punish Jeffords for opposing Bush's initial tax cut. In addition to ripping special-education funding from the budget resolution and not inviting Jeffords to an event honoring a teacher from Vermont, the White House appears to have denied Jeffords White House tour passes for his constituents. (A few years ago, Bush congressional affairs liaison Nick Calio explained that tour passes are "part of the rewards system for people [in Congress] who are helpful.") And there's reason to believe the administration was serious about sinking Jeffords's beloved Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact, which benefits Northeastern farmers over those in the Midwest. Asked by one reporter if the White House was

MATTHEW MARTIN

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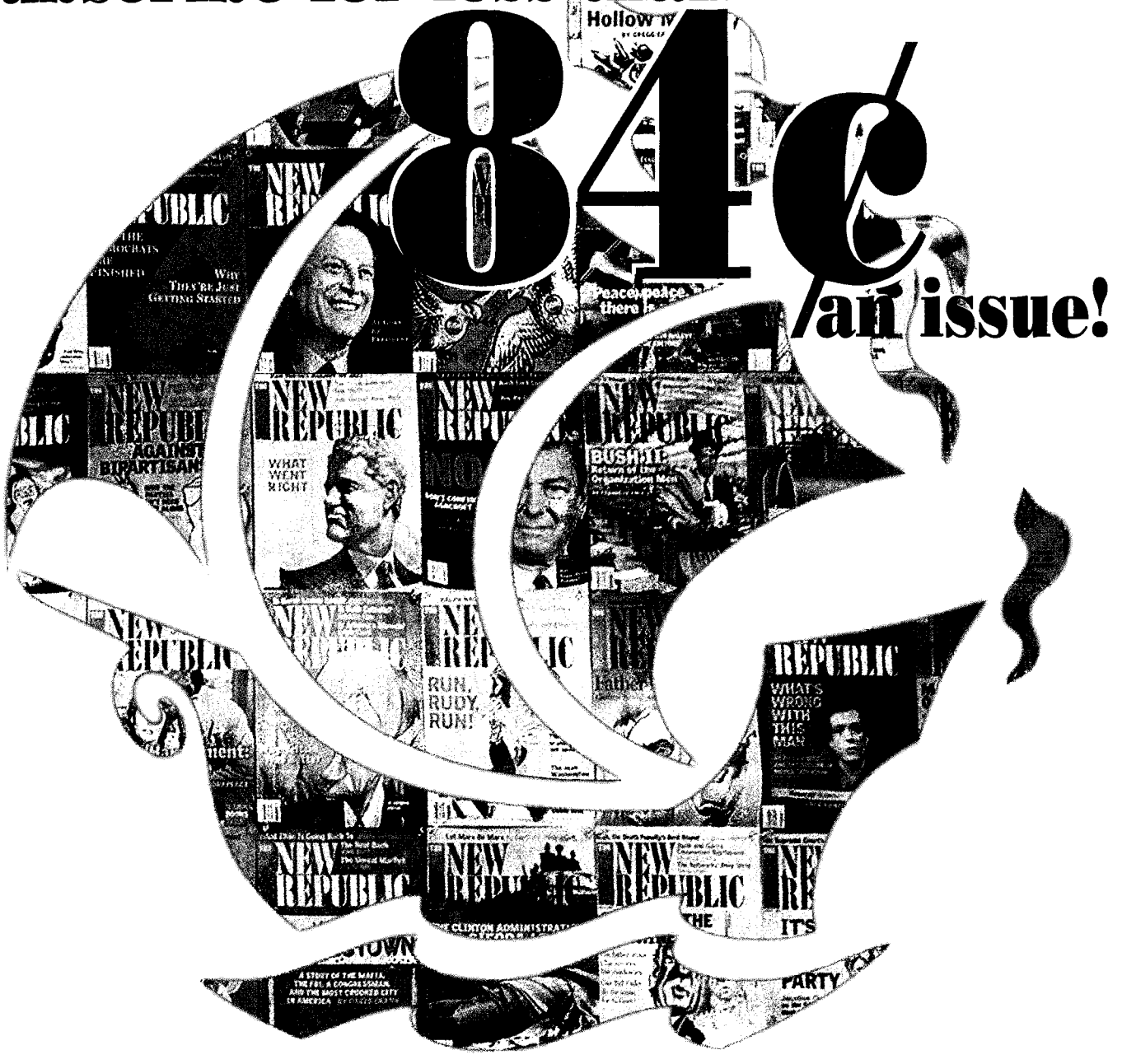

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working with Wisconsin Democrat Herb Kohl to kill the compact, Calio laughed and responded, "No comment."

Needless to say, the White House sees these allegations as, in the words of one top White House aide, "total bullshit." There are never enough White House passes to go around, the aide insists, and it's not just Jeffords who got short-changed. Besides, the passes are controlled by the visitor's office, not by Calio's shop. "Are you going to try and hurt somebody with tours?" the aide asks incredulously. "What you have," he says, "is a media-created story that is based on trying to create conflict."

It wasn't just Jeffords. A great many congressional Republicans have witnessed the administration's penchant for riding roughshod over dissenters. Jeffords's friend and colleague, first-term Senator Lincoln Chafee of Rhode Island, another Republican who helped reduce the size of Bush's tax cut, got similar treatment. According to an article in *The Hill* newspaper, Bush Chief of Staff Andy Card and Vice President Dick Cheney "subtly threatened [Chafee's] political future." In recent days, GOP lawmakers have complained that they were never adequately consulted on Bush's energy plan, which failed to include the sort of short-term help representatives need for their reelection campaigns next year. They've accused Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld of keeping them in the dark about his controversial review of the U.S. military. And, in the House, conservatives have whined about being locked out of negotiations on the education bill. (A senior Bush adviser responds, "I think with energy and defense it's fair criticism. On education, the president told people right from the beginning where he was going with that.") Few congressional Republicans sympathize with the ideological qualms that led Jeffords to jump, but many sympathize with the personal slights. Which is why, although the conservative press has lambasted Jeffords, most Republican pols have blamed the Bush administration instead.

PERHAPS THE MOST remarkable aspect of Bush's strong-arm approach is the way it contrasts with his father's. Bush père is remembered as disengaged from the backslapping and deal-making of Congress, while W. is still seen through the prism of Texas, where he built relationships across the aisle. But these stereotypes are misleading. George H.W. Bush was extremely attentive to the whims of Congress, having spent four years in the House and eight years presiding over the Senate as vice president, building relationships with people he would later negotiate with as president. Poppy was known for making frequent calls to lawmakers and gathering his own intelligence about what was happening on the Hill rather than relying solely on aides. To stay in contact with members, he played handball and exercised in the House gym, even attending its annual steak-and-potatoes dinner each year he was president. When he needed a weekend break, it wasn't unusual for him to whisk congressional pals off to Camp David with him.

Those relationships paid off in key votes such as the congressional resolution authorizing the use of force in the Persian Gulf. Bush and his staff began aggressively courting Democrats over Labor Day weekend in 1990; the Democratic Congress approved the measure the following January. And, unlike his son, Bush was known on the Hill as someone who eschewed hardball tactics. On one vote, when Bush's aides made threatening calls to supporters of Democratic Representative Sonny Montgomery of Mississippi, a handball partner of the president's, Bush ordered them to cease and desist.

By contrast, despite the White House's lengthy public relations campaign showcasing W.'s meetings with lots of congressmen, it is now clear that the president wasn't really developing deep relationships or personally lobbying many members. For example, Bush never even called Jeffords to try to get him to change his mind about voting against the budget resolution. Unlike his father, and despite his own rhetoric about "changing the tone in Washington," the president also seems untroubled by the brass-knuckle tactics his aides use to win over wavering members. After all, in his father's White House, W. himself was known as an "enforcer"—the man who flew in from Dallas to fire Chief of Staff John Sununu for what was perceived as a lack of loyalty. White House aides may be taking their cues from the president. Or they may play hardball simply because they know their boss lacks the relationships and policy expertise to cajole members into changing their minds.

UNDER DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES, a little grumbling from the congressional GOP wouldn't present the White House with much of a threat. The problem is that it plays into the hands of their primary nemesis: John McCain. Ever since W. moved in at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, the Arizona senator has needled him for being too far to the right—on taxes, guns, and health care. But, to date, McCain has been hampered by the administration's "sour grapes" defense in his effort to carve out centrist political ground—i.e., the problem was McCain's personality, not Bush's ideology. But Jeffords's parting complaint—that the GOP under Bush has moved away from being the party of "moderation, tolerance, [and] fiscal responsibility"—has given McCain's critique a salience he never could have achieved on his own. "Even people who know that what we say is true," says one McCain adviser, "in the back of their minds, they say, 'Well, there's a bitterness from the primaries,' when it's really not that. It's exactly what Jeffords has been saying. And so it's given us a lot more credence to say it."

In the coming months McCain will be saying it a lot. Practically the entire agenda set out by incoming Majority Leader Tom Daschle seems designed to encourage clashes between McCain and Bush. The first piece of Senate business after education will be the patients' bill of rights: McCain is co-sponsor, with North Carolina's John Edwards and Massachusetts's Ted Kennedy, of the most popular version of the legislation; Bush has indicated he may veto it if it passes. Then there's legislation by McCain and Joe Lieberman to close a loophole in firearms law exempting buyers at gun shows from undergoing background checks; Bush's allies in the National Rifle Association hate the bill. This summer Daschle has promised McCain that the Senate will take up election reform. Coincidentally, that's when a media consor-

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tium is scheduled to publish its recount of the Florida ballots, guaranteeing a spate of coverage questioning Bush's legitimacy. And has anyone noticed that McCain and New York Democratic Senator Chuck Schumer have their own prescription-drug bill? Even the area of potential agreement between McCain and Bush—defense spending—is now a wedge, with McCain complaining that the tax cut will crowd out funds needed for the military.

On Tuesday evening, as the capital broke out in another round of chatter about the possibility of McCain becoming an independent, McCain's top political adviser, John Weaver, was preparing to leave New Hampshire (where he lives) for Washington, D.C. Asked, as he was about to board his plane, why he was flying down, Weaver replied with a chuckle, "Where there's chaos, there's opportunity." You can be sure no one at the White House is laughing. ■

On the Hill

Block Shot

By MICHAEL CROWLEY

UNTIL JIM JEFFORDS changed everything last week, Tom Daschle's tenure as leader of the Democratic minority in the 50-50 Senate had been something of a disappointment. In the Clinton era, Daschle held together his flock almost flawlessly—he lost not a single cloture vote; not a single Democrat defected on impeachment; and rebellions he orchestrated on health care and the minimum wage drove Bob Dole out of the Senate. But with George W. Bush in the White House, the quiet South Dakotan has been forced to watch as conservative Democrats cut deals with the enemy. On this spring's tax and budget bills, the White House bypassed Daschle and negotiated with Louisiana's John Breaux. And Daschle crucially failed to convince the top-ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, Montana's Max Baucus, not to broker with Republican Chairman Charles Grassley the private deal that gave the tax bill its bipartisan sheen. By late May, when it became clear that close to one-quarter of the Senate's Democrats would vote for Bush's tax plan, Daschle sounded desperate. At a press conference, he chastised the media for ignoring his arguments and called GOP budget tactics a "degradation of the rule of law" reminiscent of African dictatorships. One senior aide to a prominent Senate Democrat told me he'd concluded Daschle was better as a tactician than as a big-picture strategist and party leader. Republicans were harsher. "The under-reported story of the past few months," says a top aide to a leading Republican senator, "is how Tom Daschle lost control of his caucus."

THE SENATE FLIPS

Then Jeffords came along. Now that Daschle controls committee chairmanships and the Senate's legislative schedule, he will no longer have to scream to get the media's attention. And he can force the Senate to consider legislation that unites Democrats and splits Republicans, not the other way around. But expectations are also much higher. That's a problem because, despite his newfound visibility and political muscle, Daschle still really can't lead. And, even if he holds his unruly caucus together to pass bills in the Senate, they'll likely get quashed in the House and pilloried by the White House. The best he can do is lose strategically—by forcing Republicans to kill popular Democratic legislation—and obstruct skillfully. "This is still largely a game of defense," says a Democratic Party strategist, "of moderating or deflecting the worst excesses of a conservative administration."

Daschle's plan is to quickly bring to the floor a slew of bills, each poll-tested to ensure its popularity not only with core Democrats but also with voters. Most are what one party operative calls "table talk" issues: a patients' bill of rights, a prescription-drug benefit, a minimum-wage hike, and possibly legislation addressing the energy "crisis," which Democrats increasingly cite as their great hope for ruining Bush's popularity. Electoral reform, a handy way of reminding people how Bush got into office, could join the list this summer. Democrats think most of these can pass the Senate. According to *The Washington Times*, House GOP leaders are already vowing to serve as a "fire wall" against such initiatives. But that's fine with Daschle—since it means Democrats can run against Tom DeLay in 2002. If some legislation makes it through the House and onto the president's desk, all the better. Says the Democratic strategist, "We're in effect going to dare them to veto everything we do."

Daschle's agenda isn't particularly imaginative or far-reaching, but party operatives believe it's what got them to 50-50 parity in the Senate. "We beat five Republican incumbent senators on the patients' bill of rights, prescription drugs, [and] minimum wage," says Michael Meehan, a former Daschle aide now helping to shape the party's message at the Democratic National Committee. And many of the Republicans who survived made campaign pledges to support these measures. Senator John Ensign of Nevada, for instance, bragged about his support for a prescription-drug benefit and Nevadans' "right to sue their HMO." Olympia Snowe of Maine and Mike DeWine of Ohio both vowed to spare seniors a choice between buying food and buying medicine. And Virginia conservative George Allen pledged his support for prescription drugs and a minimum-wage hike. "There will be pressure on them to keep their promises," says Democratic consultant Anita Dunn. And it won't hurt that, on most or all of these issues, Democrats will have Arizona Senator John McCain standing with them. "Our legislative agenda's going to be on a faster track under Daschle . . . without the usual hurdles," says McCain strategist John Weaver.

An irony of Daschle's "win with gridlock" strategy is that Republicans, even as they accuse Democrats of obstructionism, may try something similar themselves. Large chunks of the remaining Bush agenda—drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and reforming Medicare, Social Security, and the military—are politically perilous. Increasingly, GOP strategists are suggesting that Republicans—having passed

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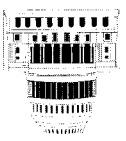
education and tax cut bills—reconcile themselves to gridlock for the next year and a half and try to force the Democrats into unpopular votes on poll-tested, symbolic issues of their own. "Before, we had to act a little more responsibly because we were pushing through the administration's agenda," says one Republican Senate aide. "Now we have a little more flexibility to prosecute ideas and amendments with an eye toward winning back the majority." In particular, Republicans may resuscitate some of the cultural issues that have hurt Democrats in the past—guns, partial-birth abortion, even flag-burning—in hopes that they will swing even more blue-collar male voters into the GOP's column in 2002. If the GOP forces those issues to the floor, Daschle will spend much of his tenure as majority leader fighting the same battles Al Gore fought last year. Which offers Daschle a chance to preview how he'd handle them in 2004. ■

Jeffords's real damage.

Retirement Plan

By NOAM SCHEIBER

IN THE DAYS following Vermont Senator Jim Jeffords's dramatic defection from the GOP, the capital was seized with talk that other Senate Republicans would follow. A headline in *The Hotline*, the daily summary of punditry and spin favored by political journalists, read "JEFFORDS II: WILL THERE BE OTHERS?" *Slate.com* speculated: "What if Jeffords persuaded his three fellow moderate Republicans from the Northeast—Lincoln Chafee of Rhode Island and Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe of Maine—to go along?" Pundits wondered what the GOP could do, as Fox News's Mara Liasson put it, to "avert another party switch."



THE SENATE FLIPS

As it happens, the pundits were half-right. The Jeffords switch may inspire a wave of legislators to abandon the GOP Senate ranks—they just won't be party switchers. Instead, Jeffords's announcement could set off a series of retirements among Republican senators demoralized by life in the minority. And, with 20 Republicans up for reelection in 2002, compared with only 14 Democrats, that could spell Democratic Senate majorities for years to come.

Talk to any senator or Senate aide about returning to the minority, and the first thing he or she will say is that it's "not much fun." Since members of the majority party control committee chairmanships, they can largely ignore the minority when it comes to crafting legislation. As material manifestation of their impotence, senators of the minority party receive smaller committee staffs, smaller committee budgets, and cramped committee office space. Even when minority-party senators do get to help write legislation in committee (as the Democrats did in the 50-50 Senate), the majority leadership still decides which bills make it to the Senate floor. And when a bill is finally voted out of the Senate, it's the majority party that appoints the conferees who resolve differences between the House and Senate versions.

All this takes a toll. Just ask Bill Bradley, Sam Nunn, Paul Simon, Claiborne Pell, Howell Heflin, David Pryor, James Exon, and Bennett Johnston—eight Democrats who retired from the Senate in 1996, after the 1994 elections swung the chamber to the Republicans. As this list suggests, the senators most likely to call it quits after losing the majority aren't the marginal ones but those accustomed—through seniority and committee chairmanships—to getting their way.

SO WHICH GOP senators might decide to forgo life in the minority? A few names have already surfaced, and others will likely follow. Tennessee's popular incumbent, Senator Fred Thompson, had already raised eyebrows last month when, in announcing his decision not to run for governor, he suggested he would "probably" seek reelection to the Senate—an ambivalence that, combined with his lackluster fund-raising efforts, had Tennessee insiders predicting he'd give up his seat. Given that Thompson is already said to be frustrated by his lack of seniority—he is term-limited as head of the unsexy Government Affairs Committee and ranks next to last on the Finance Committee and the Select Committee on Intelligence—the Jeffords switch has intensified speculation about his departure. Says an aide to one Tennessee congressman, "[T]he word among the Tennessee delegation" is that Thompson is out. Democratic Representatives John Tanner and Harold Ford Jr. have already announced that they'll seek the seat if it's open.

Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Frank Murkowski was already talking about running for Alaska governor in 2002, a race many feel he would almost certainly win. Factor in the loss of a gavel, and the move looks all but assured. And though Alaska's state legislature recently passed a bill that would essentially allow Murkowski to appoint a successor to finish out his term, Alaska political observers believe current Democratic Governor Tony Knowles would have an excellent shot at picking off any Republican who defends the seat in 2004.

But New Mexico Republican Pete Domenici represents what could be the biggest blow to Republican chances of winning back the Senate. Budget Committee aides say Domenici lives for his duties as chairman but has become frustrated by having to toe what he perceives to be the administration's overly stingy line on spending. Throw in the loss of his chairmanship and reports of occasional health problems, and it's no surprise that rumors of an impending departure are suddenly swirling. Should that come to pass, most observers believe former Clinton Energy Secretary Bill Richardson would gladly abandon his widely anticipated gubernatorial bid and train his sights on the Senate instead. According to Armando Gutierrez, a New Mexico media consultant and former Gore campaign consultant, "It's a fairly open secret that [Richardson] would prefer to be in D.C."

Finally, there are those Republican senators who probably would have retired in 2002, with or without a majority, but

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who now have less of a reason than ever to stick it out. Chief among them is South Carolina's Strom Thurmond, who, by most accounts, has been a senator in name only these last few months (see "Strom?," by Michael Crowley, April 30). Some even suggest that the loss of the majority opens the door for Thurmond (on whom the recent late nights of tax cut wrangling took a serious physical toll) to call it quits before his term expires, leaving a Democratic governor to name his successor. Similarly, North Carolina's Jesse Helms would probably have been deterred from seeking a sixth term by age, ill health, and his term limit as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. But the loss of the majority makes it a near certainty. Though Helms holds his reelection cards close to his chest, he has taken few steps to prepare for reelection, commissioning only a single poll and a single fund-raising letter to date. His retirement could be great news for Democrats. While prospects of a North Carolina pickup took a hit last month when the top Democratic prospect, former White House Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles, elected to forgo the race, insiders suggest that former four-term North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt would find it difficult to stay out of a race that didn't include Helms.

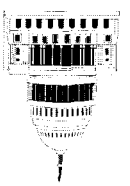
After the Democratic retirements of 1996, one Democratic senator told *The Hill* newspaper that "I resent the hell out of" being abandoned. For the last few days, Jim Jeffords has been the sole object of conservative resentment. Next year, perhaps, he'll have company. ■

Jeffords, dairy socialist.

Spilled Milk

By JONATHAN CHAIT

WHEN JIM JEFFORDS crossed President Bush in April by voting to reduce the size of the tax cut, angry Republicans threatened that they would "get" him—perhaps by dismantling the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact, a subsidy dear to Vermont dairy farmers. Now that Jeffords has left the Republican Party, partly due to such bullying, some conservatives are determined to make good on their threat. "I was walking through the Capitol that day [that Jeffords defected]," recalls GOP activist Grover Norquist, "and staffers were saying, 'Dairy Compact—*dead*.'"



THE SENATE FLIPS

It would seem the kind of political dispute in which you can determine the proper position merely by contrasting the parties involved. On one side, you have vengeful White House operatives employing mafioso tactics; on the other, a lone, plainspoken New England moderate standing up for beleaguered family farmers. But that superficial impression is misleading. Jeffords's Dairy Compact is, in fact, an indefensible boondoggle. In this case, the Bushies' penchant for revenge neatly coincides with the public interest.

America's dairy industry operates under a system that can best be described as socialism. Rather than allow supply and demand to set prices, milk processors have prices set by the federal government. These prices, moreover, vary radically from region to region: Dairy farmers from those parts of the country most suited to dairy farming receive the lowest payments for their milk, and those from the least-efficient regions receive the highest. The system, by design, punishes efficient farmers and rewards inefficient ones.

The purpose of this perverse system is to ensure that each region of the country locally produces its own milk. This requirement made some sense when the regulations were written in the 1930s: People needed fresh, local milk unspoiled by cross-country trekking. Since then, however, improvements in refrigeration and trucking have made it possible to transport milk great distances without spoilage, rendering the regulations nonsensical.

Nonetheless, local dairy farmers have successfully defended this outdated system against attempts to reform it, and in 1996—at the behest of Pat Leahy, Vermont's other senator—Congress allowed states in the Northeast to jack up their milk prices even higher than the federal milk formula allowed. The resulting arrangement, the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact, has since become politically sacrosanct among Northeastern representatives of both parties. Witness the speed with which Hillary Clinton, upon moving to New York to run for Senate, swore her fealty to it.

From the behavior of Northeastern politicians such as Jeffords and Clinton, one might infer that the Dairy Compact benefits their constituents as a whole. But, in fact, it hurts the vast majority. The compact drives up the cost of milk in the Northeast by an extra five cents or so per gallon. It is, in effect, a tax on food, and—since the poor devote the highest percentage of their income to food—extremely regressive.

So what do Northeasterners get in return for this tax? According to its website, the Dairy Compact seeks "to assure the continued viability of dairy farming in the [N]ortheast, and to assure consumers of an adequate, local supply of pure and wholesome milk." Of course, without the compact, Northeasterners could have pure and wholesome milk anyway. The only difference is that they would pay less, and more of it would come from Wisconsin. Should the latter fact bother Northeasterners? It's hard to see why. Floridians produce a disproportionate number of oranges, and Detroiters build a disproportionate number of cars. Suppose Detroiters decided to restrict themselves to locally grown oranges, and Floridians to locally built cars. The only reason the current dairy system doesn't come across as equally ridiculous is that it's been in place for several decades.

The Dairy Compact survives because its benefits accrue to a well-organized minority, while its costs are borne by a diffuse and largely ignorant public. Indeed, preventing open discussion of the plan is essential to the Dairy Compact's survival. Jeffords practically admitted as much in April. "Hopefully . . . everybody will be concentrating on something else other than the compact," he told the Associated Press, "and thus, we can

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sneak it in through the stealth of the night, get it through when people aren't looking." Somehow this quote has not made it into any Jeffords-as-Jimmy-Stewart hagiography that proliferated during the last week.

To be sure, ending dairy socialism would put inefficient farmers out of business—a prospect that brings on a fuzzy-minded sentimentalism in some liberals. A *Boston Globe* editorial on the need to preserve small family farms, published last year, typifies this logic. "The children of such farmers are reluctant to endure 13-hour days for incomes that are, at best, modest," the editorial noted. "It is a grueling undertaking, particularly in competition with larger farms ... which have greater mechanization and hundreds of animals." But rather than conclude that these farmers' children should move into other lines of work, the *Globe* argues that the compact should be maintained so they can toil in futility for generations. The percentage of the population involved in agriculture has been declining for centuries. This is the basis for economic and social progress. It makes no more sense now to keep people on the farm than it did 100 years ago.

Alas, agrarian mythology has embedded itself so deeply in the political culture that it is nearly impossible to uproot. If no politician is willing to push reform on its own merit, the only available recourse may be some enlightened thuggery by Bush adviser Karl Rove and his minions. Nice Dairy Compact you've got there, Senator Jeffords. Shame if anything should happen to it. ■

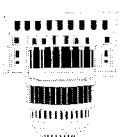
ROB BARBONI

Burlington Dispatch

State's Right

By Benjamin Soskis

Patrick Garahan, chairman of the Vermont Republican Party, is an affable man. But discussing Senator Jim Jeffords's apostasy he becomes visibly angry. "You would have had to hold a gun to my head and hold my kids hostage, and I'm still not sure I would have done what [Jeffords] did. That's how strongly I feel about President Bush and the Republican Party," he announces when I visit him at his South Burlington home. Garahan's small office is festooned with Republican badges and mementos. I've barely sat down when he hands me one: a photograph of himself and Bush smiling fondly at each other during a recent fund-raiser. Senator Jeffords, Garahan chuckles, had been standing beside him; a prescient cameraman conveniently cropped him out.



The Senate Flips

Over the last week the media has depicted Jeffords as the face of Vermont's Republican Party: moderate, beleaguered, and, above all, independent. In fact, the party's real face is Patrick Garahan. Which is to say, the Vermont Republican Party isn't very independent at all; its most striking quality in recent years has been its fierce loyalty to the conservatism of the national GOP. And it's loyalty—not independence—that has made the Vermont GOP a shadow of its former self.

The Vermont Republican Party, once firmly entrenched in the state, has been roiled by two conflicting trends. Over the past four decades, as New Yorkers have migrated to Vermont's bucolic hills, the state has moved leftward—reviving the once-moribund Democratic Party. But, during the very same period, the national Republican Party has moved right—abandoning the fiscally conservative, culturally progressive politics that had defined the Vermont GOP. Consequently, notes University of Vermont professor Frank Bryan, "Vermont Republicans saw themselves increasingly marginalized" within the national party.

By the early '90s, when a Democrat became governor and the state opted for Bill Clinton over Bush père, Vermont's Republican Party was in unmistakable decline. But rather than follow the voters leftward, the state GOP followed its national party rightward—embracing social conservatism and anti-tax rhetoric. Throughout the '90s the party exploited local grumbling over a property tax supporting education funding and over strict land-use regulations. But in November 1998 the Vermont GOP received a real gift—a legitimate liberal bogeyman—when the state Supreme Court agreed to hear a case about whether gay couples were entitled to the same benefits as heterosexual ones. (The court ruled in favor of gay couples the following year.) In April 2000 the Democratic state House passed legislation establishing these "civil unions," and, soon after, the Democratic governor signed it into law.

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State Republicans pounced. TAKE BACK VERMONT signs sprouted up throughout Vermont, and Operation Rescue founder Randall Terry set up shop in Montpelier. The reactionary fervor culminated in the 2000 gubernatorial campaign of Ruth Dwyer, who had defeated a more moderate Republican in the primary. Dwyer barnstormed the state, protesting the "homosexual agenda" and warning that, since ancient Rome, "any society that has fooled around with the basic structure of the nuclear family has come to grief."

Moderate Republicans who had supported civil unions were purged from the party ranks. Richard Mallary, a former speaker of the Vermont House, became an independent. The party, wrote Mallary last year, was "departing from [the] principles" of Lincoln: "justice and opportunity for all, individual initiative and responsibility." Dwyer lost, but Republicans picked up 15 House seats, which, when added to the eleven House seats they had won in 1998, gave them a majority there for the first time in 16 years. And, early this May, with the GOP in control, the body voted to declare "marriage" valid only between a man and a woman.

In light of the earlier electoral victories, at the Republican National Convention last year, Garahan promised a "Republican resurgence." But Jeffords's departure from the party, and the overwhelming popular support his decision received, suggests it is a false dawn. (In a poll shortly before Jeffords left the party, more than two-thirds of Vermonters said they would support such a move.) Already, prominent state Republicans are pointing to Jeffords's departure as evidence that the state party's obsession with civil unions will leave it weaker than ever. According to the *Burlington Free Press*, William Gilbert, a former secretary of administration under the last Republican governor, has blasted the chairman for the party's extremism in an open letter. "Your strident conservatism and intolerance has made pride in being a member of the Republican Party an embarrassment." Critics of the Vermont GOP's rightward strategy contrast it with Maine, where moderate Republicans have achieved significant electoral successes (including both Senate seats); in Vermont, by contrast, there is now only one Republican statewide officeholder and no Republican in the state's congressional delegation for the first time since 1854. Dwyer could have been speaking for her entire party when she admitted, after her loss last year, "The people of Vermont clearly don't believe what we believe, and we've got to accept that."

Indeed, even Garahan himself seems to implicitly accept that the party may have moved too far to the right. For this year's gubernatorial race, he is touting a more moderate candidate, pro-choice state Treasurer Jim Douglas, as the party's best chance to win back the governor's mansion. And, after blasting Jeffords's decision as "ethically and morally dishonest," Garahan suggested that party leaders might tone down their anti-Jeffords rhetoric. "We're probably just going to sit tight for a while." They could have used that restraint a little sooner. ■

Why the Bushies love monopoly.

Trust Walk

By JOHN B. JUDIS

YOU'VE PROBABLY NEVER heard of Charles James or Tim Muris. Maybe not even Michael Powell. But, among them, they could have a bigger impact on the American economy than the secretary of the treasury or the secretary of commerce could. James is Bush's nominee to run the Department of Justice's antitrust division. Muris was confirmed last week to run the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). And Powell was elevated last January to chair the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and then confirmed last month for a new five-year term. Together they herald a radical shift in the enforcement of America's antitrust laws: Under the Bush administration, there may not be any.

Antitrust isn't exciting, but it's crucial. Because the American economy depends on robust competition—as opposed to the bank-industry cartels or direct government management common in Europe and Asia—preventing concentrations of corporate power is essential for maintaining growth and fostering innovation. It's also essential to American democracy: Antitrust laws provide a Madisonian barrier to the translation of economic power into political power. The Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890 was a response to the power that Standard Oil and a few railroads held not just over commerce but over state legislatures as well. As British economist Andrew Shonfield wrote in his classic 1965 study, *Modern Capitalism*, America's antitrust laws are "the only firm guarantee of pluralism, the only defense against overwhelming private power. Public authority having been deliberately weakened by division, private power must be kept divided, too."

The Clinton administration, after a slow start, pursued antitrust cases vigorously. It doubled the number brought under Ronald Reagan and waged high-profile battles against Microsoft, Intel, and the merger of Staples and Office Depot—sending a message to corporate America that it would not tolerate anti-competitive concentrations of power. But Bush's appointments send a very different message. James, a cautious corporate lawyer, served as acting head of the antitrust division under W.'s father in 1992—a year in which it filed just four merger cases. And since then he has criticized Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson's decision against

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Microsoft. Muris ran the FTC's Bureau of Competition under Reagan. Afterward, he became a professor at George Mason University, a consultant to companies threatened by antitrust action, and an outspoken critic of the Clinton administration's Justice Department and FTC. Then there's Powell, son of the secretary of state, who, in his few months as chairman, has already reined in the FCC. Asked if he would demand the kind of competition-ensuring conditions that the FCC and the FTC put on the merger of America Online and Time Warner, Powell said succinctly, "That's not my style." All the evidence suggests that, on the big antitrust questions, the Bush administration feels the same way.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S MOST high-profile decision will be in the Justice Department's suit against Microsoft—which is currently being appealed and will eventually go to the Supreme Court unless the Bush administration settles in Microsoft's favor. The Clinton administration launched the case because it believed the new information economy had fundamentally changed the nature of antitrust. In the old economy, a firm's success usually spawned new competitors. To fend off those competitors, a monopoly would have to engage in explicitly anti-competitive behavior—say, by striking exclusive deals with distributors. In the new economy, by contrast, success itself could impede competition, thanks to what economists call a "network effect." For example, Microsoft's enormous success in selling its operating system, Windows, prompted software developers to create programs for it rather than for rival systems; this led consumers and computer manufacturers to prefer the Microsoft operating system, not necessarily because it worked better but because it could be used with more software applications. For a new entrant to succeed in that market, it had to come up with a system that was not merely superior to Windows but far superior—enough so that consumers would make do with fewer software applications. And the same dynamic could affect those applications, too, if consumers believed that, by using a more widely used word processor, they would have an easier time exchanging their files. For that reason, the Clinton Justice Department and FTC believed they had to be particularly vigilant in preventing firms from using their dominance to block competitors that were trying to "leapfrog" their technology. That's largely why the Clinton administration went after Microsoft, which it charged with attempting to thwart the adoption of a new Internet-based operating system, and why it was so intent on scrutinizing other high-tech companies (like Intel) that it suspected of using market power in a similar manner.

The Clintonites also recognized that in the new economy you couldn't always assume that anti-competitive behavior would immediately hurt consumers. In the classic instance of a monopoly, a firm uses its control of the market share to cut supply and drive up prices. This is basically what happened in the late nineteenth century, when railroad barons jacked up fares, and in the early twentieth century, when electric companies raised utility prices. This kind of thing still happens—ask anybody in California. But more often in the new economy, monopolistic, anti-competitive behavior initially benefits consumers. A company with market dominance may slash its prices well below cost to keep competitors from gaining a foothold. But while cheaper goods may benefit consumers at first, the chilling effect on competition hurts them in the long run by stifling innovation and allowing monopolies to safely jack up prices in the future. When Microsoft gave away its Internet browser for free, for example, it saved consumers money but arguably slowed down the pace of innovation by warding off other would-be competitors and by undermining the financial stability of its rival, Netscape. This understanding of competition guided not only the Justice Department's case against Microsoft but the FTC's complaint against Intel as well.

Conservatives might have been expected to accept this argument. For two decades, their bible was Robert Bork's 1978 work, *The Antitrust Paradox*, which argued that the only meaningful antitrust standard was whether a firm's behavior contributed to or detracted from economic efficiency. By that standard, the Clinton administration's case against Microsoft makes sense, which is why Bork himself has endorsed it. But forced to choose between the Clinton Justice Department and new economy behemoths, most conservatives have suddenly become champions of consumers, insisting that an antitrust violation can occur only if consumers are immediately harmed. "The antitrust standard of proven consumer harm is the most essential point at issue," declares Citizens for a Sound Economy, a conservative interest group that has received funding from Microsoft.

While the Bush administration has yet to formally announce its position, its comments and appointments suggest it buys the new conservative line. During last year's presidential campaign, Bush and economic adviser Lawrence Lindsey both expressed skepticism about the Clinton administration's case against Microsoft. James criticized Judge Jackson's decision, and Muris, while making no comment on Microsoft, was harshly critical of the FTC's very similar 1996 complaint against Intel. Muris, who worked on the case as a consultant to Intel, authored a paper in the *Antitrust Law Journal* attacking the Clinton administration's approach to high-tech cases for its failure to show immediate harm to consumers. He called the Intel decision "wrong on the law, wrong on policy, and wrong on the facts."

Mergers are the second area in which the Bushies must choose whether to continue Clinton administration enforcement or to roll back regulation to the Reagan era. One of the first tests will be airlines. When the Carter administration deregulated the airlines in 1978, a host of new, low-cost carriers emerged, driving down fares on well-traveled routes. But in the last decade, the large airlines have begun to merge, and in the process they have consolidated control over the industry through their control of airport hubs. Albert Foer of the American Antitrust Institute warns that they are "swapping regulated monopoly for unregulated monopoly." When upstart Vanguard Airlines tried to challenge American Airlines' grip on Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, for example, American responded by lowering prices and increasing capacity on the routes it shared with Vanguard. Those moves cost American money in the short run, but they made the enterprise highly unprofitable for Vanguard—so

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unprofitable that Vanguard ultimately disbanded its flights in and out of the airport, after which American reduced its capacity and raised its prices. It appeared to be classic anti-competitive behavior.

The Clinton administration tried gamely to fight this sort of action. It charged American with predatory pricing and blocked other potentially anti-competitive mergers like the proposed marriage of Continental and Northwest Airlines. But this April a conservative federal judge turned back the case against American. And even more daunting airline mergers loom: United Airlines wants to swallow US Airways, while, this March, American won the Bush Justice Department's approval to absorb TWA. That would reduce the number of major U.S. carriers to six (maybe fewer if it sets off yet another wave of mergers) while handing about half of all U.S. air traffic to two airlines: American and United. This would allow the major airlines easily to eliminate competition by informally parceling out routes. The Bush administration must decide whether to approve these new mergers and whether to appeal the American ruling.

Telecommunications is a similar story. The Clinton administration blocked a merger between MCI WorldCom and Sprint; it approved others only on the condition that the companies eliminate specific threats to competition. (America Online and Time Warner, for instance, had to agree to allow rival Internet providers access to their broadband cable networks.) No big telecom mergers are currently up for review, but that is because companies are waiting to see whether the Bush administration will relax FCC limits on network ownership of TV stations and on cross-ownership of television, print, cable, and radio.

When these mergers do come up, the Bush administration will probably wave them through—because of not only ideology but also myriad connections between industry players and the administration. American Airlines chief executive Donald Carty was a Bush pioneer, while Black Entertainment Television's Robert Johnson, who stands to inherit US Airways' Washington, D.C., routes in the event of a merger, has become an administration favorite—publicly defending Bush's proposals to repeal the estate tax and privatize Social Security. While James will have to recuse himself from the United-US Airways merger because he is Johnson's lawyer, Muris backed American against the government and rarely sees a merger he doesn't like. For instance, he opposed the FTC's successful attempt to block a merger between baby-food makers H.J. Heinz and Beech-Nut, even though the merger would have reduced the number of baby-food makers from three to two.

Meanwhile, at the FCC, Powell has already demonstrated his support for telecom mergers and for the expansion of the Baby Bells into long-distance service. This spring, Powell voted to let Verizon offer long-distance service in New England, even though the Telecommunications Act of 1996 specifically prohibits Baby Bells from offering long-distance until they open themselves to competition for local service—something Massachusetts Attorney General Tom Reilly argues Verizon has not really done. Powell has also rejected appeals from consumer groups to reregulate the cable industry, even though cable companies are using their monopoly position to drive up prices.

In a sense, Powell's FCC is the most crucial antitrust agency of all. While the Justice Department and the FTC are concerned primarily with whether corporations compete fairly with one another, the FCC's job (according to its founding statute) is to determine whether a merger or corporate expansion is "in the public interest." Under this broader mandate, the FCC has regularly restricted the concentration of ownership because it might limit the diversity of ideas.

Naturally, media companies like Viacom and Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation—and their various backers in Congress—have long pressured the FCC to allow exactly this kind of concentration. In 1996 they got Congress, through the Telecommunications Act, to relax regulation on how many radio stations a company could own in a single market. In 1999 the FCC reluctantly agreed to permit a company to own two TV stations in a single market. Now the industry wants Powell to go even further. Large networks want clearance to buy smaller ones. Media conglomerates want the right to own both a major newspaper and a TV station in the same market. And TV networks want the freedom to buy as many local TV stations as they wish. (Under current law, a network cannot own local stations whose signals collectively reach more than 35 percent of the nation's viewers.)

The danger of this kind of concentration should be obvious. If a single company controls the principal print, TV, and radio outlets in a city, it can exert significant control over what opinions are heard and how they are presented. Powell, however, seems oblivious to this danger. In April he abandoned the restriction prohibiting a single company from owning multiple networks; this summer he is expected to relax the restriction on ownership of newspapers and TV stations in the same market. Powell seems to see the media not as a special public utility but as just another business. He has argued that allowing networks to buy other networks "will not harm, and indeed is likely to promote, competitive efficiency and diversity," adding that "any efficiencies gained through such mergers would likely make the emerging networks more effective competitors." This is more than just a quibble with specific regulations. Powell questions the very premise behind the agency he heads—the protection of "the public interest." In 1998 he told a meeting of the American Bar Association: "The best that I can discern is that the public interest standard is a bit like modern art—people see in it what they want to see. That may be a fine quality for art, but it is a bit of a problem when that quality exists in a legal standard." Of course, only Congress and the president can change the FCC's charter. But, de facto, Powell already has.

Powell and Muris are already ensconced in office—confirmed unanimously by voice vote, even though they will likely undermine the purpose of the agencies they direct. James, the least ideological of the trio, will probably get a free pass also. That can only mean one thing: The same senators who carefully scrutinize the people in charge of the nation's environment or its civil rights laws don't understand that it also matters who enforces the country's antitrust laws. They are likely to find out the hard way. ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Seeing Is Disbelieving

In 1996 a brash young Australian director named Baz Luhrmann, with one film and some hit songs to his credit, made a modernized version of *Romeo and Juliet*. The first thing we saw was a television set with a newscaster speaking the opening chorus. The setting was "Verona Beach" in the 1990s; the balcony scene took place in a swimming pool; the characters were racially diversified, drove large convertibles, and carried pistols. I can't say that I enjoyed the film, but I admired its—odd word though it is—sincerity. More than most "concept" theater productions of Shakespeare that I have seen, this film showed conviction rather than blatant bravado, an attempt to convey the idea that Shakespearean truth persists through the ages. Its very wildness evoked some of the passion of the original.

Now Luhrmann has made **Moulin Rouge** (20th Century Fox), which has a very different agenda. Those who remember John Huston's film of that name (1952) may expect another biography of Toulouse-Lautrec, with giant sufferings in a pygmy body. Toulouse is in the new film, but only as one of the attendant gargoyles. The focus, we think at the start, is on a young English writer in Paris at the start of the last century and his rocky love affair with the star of the Moulin Rouge, the famous cabaret, which he can see from his window.

If that focus were maintained, this film might have some *vie Parisienne* glamour and some *La Bohème* pathos. But the focus soon shifts to Luhrmann. He seems much less interested in his story than he is in Luhrmann virtuosity. Intense close-ups of lovers' faces, kissing or just breathing in each other's breath; intense close-ups of almost everyone; grotesque makeup on all the actors except the lovers and the cabaret dancers; a cascade of kaleidoscopic cuts and juxtapositions—these are what the director really wants us to admire, it seems.

But that second focus, too, dissolves into another. The virtuosity is being used to an almost savage end. For the first fifteen minutes or so, we are stunned by the incessant flow of splendiferous settings and images, spectacular cabaret shows. The production design by Catherine Martin, who costumed *Romeo and Juliet* and who also collaborated on the costumes here with Angus Strathie, is lush. The cinematography of Donald M. McAlpine, who did *My Brilliant Career*, *Breaker Morant*, and of course *Romeo and Juliet*, not only exploits the bizarre luxury of the boudoirs and the cabaret shows, it gives the whole art nouveau ambience a garish decadence.

But there is more. Luhrmann is out to subvert the very ambience that he and his collaborators have created. The first hint is in the score. We soon begin to hear anachronistic music—from *The Sound of Music* to a Madonna number. Sometimes we hear familiar pop lyrics spoken as dialogue. (The screenplay, by the way, is by Luhrmann and Craig Pearce, and it certainly is by the way.) This musical incongruity leads to easy laughs, as the audience recognizes the latter-day music in this fin-de-siècle story, but, more importantly, it helps Luhrmann's ultimate basic purpose. He wants to make us aware of the means by which he is manipulating us. With this mix of period and mod music, with the Punchinello quality of most of his people, he wants to flay the period open. Not, it seems, because he particularly hates the Belle Époque, but because he hates the process of romantic manipulation. With the musical ridicule and with much else that follows, he mocks the manufacture of sentimental reverence.

The framework of the screenplay is the book that the writer-hero, Christian, is whacking out on a typewriter in a Parisian garret a year after his love affair began. We move from huge close-ups of his typing to the cabaret across the way and to Christian's encounter, a year earlier, with Satine, the star. He is quickly in love, she is in whatever she prefers to be in at the moment. ("I choose my emotions," she says at one point.) A fabulously rich duke is also smitten with her, and so far as any drama is ignited, which is not very far, it is in the suitors' rivalry for Satine, poor but fervent love versus gilded whim. But the only real interest stirred by the plot is in recognition—picking out the occasional lifts from Dumas's play *La Dame aux Camélias* and Piave's libretto for *La Traviata*. Christian actually does throw money in Satine's face after she has left him for the duke; she actually is dying of consumption. These "lifts" are there for the same reason as the anachronistic music: mockery. "Oh, you're moved by Dumas and Verdi, are you?" Luhrmann seems to say. "Well, take a look at the mechanics."

The net result of all this cinematic whirling, of the "wrong" music and of the parodic plot, is that nothing at all in the film moves us. (How could we be moved by a film that has hot scenes played on top of an immense dummy elephant?) Characters are only programmed composites; anguishes are flooded across the screen as part of the décor. And this, too, is part of Luhrmann's craftiness. He wants us to be unmoved. He wants us to see the emotional climaxes as trickeries, disclosed here by a caustic postmodernist. With near-Brechtian brutality, swathed though it is in silks and frills, he is scoffing at the fabrications of romance.

This procedure makes rough demands on his actors. They are compelled to plunge into torrents of feeling though they have no real beings. Satine's line about choosing emotions seems to apply to the whole cast and is part of the "exposure." Satine is played by Nicole Kidman, insofar as she is recognizable. She is aggressively made up, with a mouth that is meant to suggest more than a mouth; she is furiously costumed; and she is thrust at us, on beds and trapezes, as the summa of sex. Because she has no reality, it is a tough job; and in any case Kidman is no Dietrich.

Christian is played by the Scottish actor Ewan McGregor, who does everything he is asked to do as heatedly as possible; but he, too, has to contend with the deliberately pseudo-emotional script and style. Besides, Luhrmann and McAlpine apparently noticed that McGregor has a slight resemblance to Laurence Olivier, so we get a number of Heathcliff shots, even to the lock of hair on the forehead—another subtle mockery of romance.

Jim Broadbent, the affable Englishman who was W.S. Gilbert in *Topsy-Turvy*, plays the manager and compère of the cabaret, as egregiously made-up as most of the actors. Broadbent is miscast; guile and show-biz warmth do not come easily to him. (Remember an antecedent in this sort of role, Peter Ustinov in *Lola Montes*.) The gifted John Leguizamo, who was Luhrmann's Tybalt in 1996, is here Toulouse, hobbling and grimacing away, but with no person. Richard Roxburgh, as the

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duke, is insufficiently ducal, even in this charade.

We are left, then, with a work that is spheres away from Luhrmann's *Romeo and Juliet*, which was ultimately an attempt to be true. This film intricately disguises the fact that it is a disguise. Underneath its swirls and swoonings, we see at the last a hatred of what it is lavishly doing. ■

Black comedy's reactionary hipness.

The Mirth of a Nation

By JUSTIN DRIVER

AT THE NAACP'S annual Image Awards in March, the organization inducted Sidney Poitier into its Hall of Fame. While such occasions are often carnivals of hyperbole and counterfeit sentiment, it was entirely justified for Morgan Freeman to claim, during the ceremony, that Poitier's acting had "singlehandedly changed the images of blacks in cinema." As Poitier strolled toward the stage amid a standing ovation, however, his audience was faced with a bizarre juxtaposition; for the career of the show's host, Chris Tucker, has amounted to an assault upon the great man's achievement. If Sidney Poitier's performances transformed Hollywood's depictions of African Americans for the better—by making them appear more complicated, more dignified, and more stirring than they had appeared before—Chris Tucker and his fellow comedian Chris Rock are attempting to shuck, jive, grin, shout, and bulge their eyes all the way back to the days of minstrelsy.

Yes, minstrelsy. Both Tucker and Rock rely heavily for their effects upon The Voice—a high-pitched, piercing shrill that seems to work most effectively when shouted through a grotesquely enormous grin. Regardless of the emotion that the scene calls for, Tucker and Rock accent The Voice with preternaturally popping eyes, which have the effect of an endless succession of exclamation points. Excitement, fear, anger, disappointment, and bemusement all receive the same bug-eyed treatment. Recall Tucker's portrayal of Ruby Rhod in *The Fifth Element*. The role called for a twenty-third-century television host, but—blond hair and space-age getup notwithstanding—Ruby Rhod looked and sounded as though he had wandered off the set of *Watermelon Contest*. With unintelligible screams and imbecilic stammers, Tucker affected the perpetually frightened look that was a staple of the old minstrel shows.

Rock's comedy, meanwhile, is divided against itself by a stark and unfortunate contrast in content and form. While his material varies wildly in its quality, he prefers to deliver even his most incisive comedy in a buffoonish style. In "Bigger & Blacker," Rock jokes that the most racist people in the word are "old black men." Elderly black men may behave obsequiously in the presence of whites, he notes, but they rail against "crackers" as soon as whites are out of earshot. Funny stuff. There is only one problem: when Rock speaks in his most groveling Mister Charlie voice, it is nearly indistinguishable from his usual manner of speaking.

MINSTREL SHOWS WERE America's most popular form of entertainment in the nineteenth century. Although white performers had appeared in blackface before, Thomas Dartmouth "Daddy" Rice's performance of "Jim Crow" in the early 1830s proved wildly popular and galvanized the form. Claiming that he had learned the tune from a black man in Louisville, Rice sang the lines in an exaggerated black dialect: "Weel about and turn about and do jis so/Eb'ry time I weel about and I jump Jim Crow...." The minstrel shows enjoyed their greatest popularity among the lower and working classes of the urban North. They featured skits and songs, performed by whites, that lampooned the perceived characteristics of the black population. Mel Watkins's *On the Real Side*, a survey of African American humor, contends that these productions—or "coon shows," as they were called—were responsible for introducing "a form of entertainment that would codify the public image of blacks as the prototypical Fool or Sambo."

Predictably, some abolitionists found nothing amusing in the new form of humor. Minstrels, in the view of Frederick Douglass, were "the filthy scum of white society, who have stolen from us a complexion denied to them by nature, in which to make money, and pander to the corrupt taste of their white fellow citizens." Shortly after Douglass expressed that opinion in 1848, blacks started performing in their own minstrel troupes. Although these groups billed themselves as authentic representatives of the black experience—one newspaper called a black troupe "genuine plantation darkies from the South" and "great delineators of darky life"—they were, in fact, meta-minstrels: blacks imitating whites imitating blacks.

Bert Williams, a Bahamian-born black performer around the turn of the century, embodied this meta-minstrelsy in a particularly absurd fashion. Williams diligently trained himself to move and to speak in a manner that would be sufficiently "black" for minstrel shows. Claiming that coon talk "was as much a foreign dialect as that of the Italian," he endlessly practiced the speech: "Don't loaf 'round de corners an' 'pend on de Lord fuh yo' daily bread. De Lord ain't runnin' no bakery." With George Walker, Williams constituted the minstrel team "Two Real Coons." He was a supremely talented actor, and off-stage he enjoyed discussing Voltaire and Kant; but he loathed the coon characters that he felt compelled to portray. W.C. Fields memorably termed Williams "the funniest man I ever saw and the saddest man I ever knew."

History's most notorious coon, of course, was Lincoln Theodore Monroe Andrew Perry, or Stepin Fetchit. He experienced no such conflicted feelings about the demeaning roles that he played in more than forty motion pictures between 1927 and 1976. When critics charged that his portrayals of lazy, stammering, and confused characters were detrimental to the progress of blacks, Stepin Fetchit responded that "it was Step' who elevated the Negro to the dignity of a Hollywood star. I made the Negro a first-class citizen all over the world ... somebody it was all right to associate with."

Chris Tucker and Chris Rock bear a striking physical resemblance to the man that Donald Bogle has characterized as the "arch-coon." Bogle's description of Stepin Fetchit could, with only minor tweaking, easily be applied to Tucker and Rock: "He was tall and skinny.... His grin was always very wide, his teeth very white, his eyes very widened, his feet very large, his walk very slow, his dialect very broken." Tucker and Rock, needless to say, have modified their rendition of the coon to better suit their better times. They are nothing if not of their moment.

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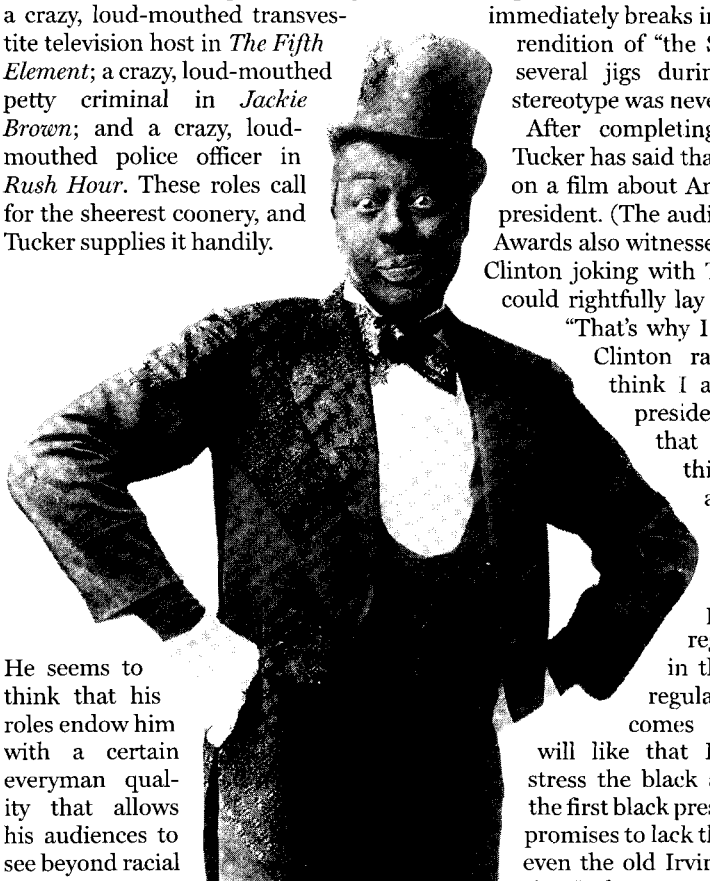
The old coon was a cheerful simpleton who regarded work with utter contempt. Coons were assigned these characteristics, naturally enough, to assuage white concerns about the moral propriety of slavery. But the contemporary coon, the post-civil-rights coon, now guards a keen sense of racial injustice alongside the old beaming and ingratiating smiles. Where Stepin Fetchit spoke slowly and was careful never to offend, Tucker and Rock speak quickly, loudly, profanely, and with every intention to provoke. They would recoil at the suggestion that they are at all like Stepin Fetchit. They seem to flatter themselves that their brand of humor is a momentous retort to Fetchitism.

Tucker and Rock would prefer to derive themselves from Richard Pryor. They like to think of their routines as edgy and emancipating in the mold of Pryor's comedy in the early 1970s; but their routines seem merely tired, and their edginess looks like nothing more than a show-biz convention. When Pryor riffed on the differences between blacks and whites—between, say, black funerals and white funerals—a measure of courage was required, and also a measure of anguish, rather like Lenny Bruce's famous bits about the differences between Jews and non-Jews. But courage is no longer necessary for racial humor, and anguish has been replaced by agenting; every black comedian appropriates the same formula, substituting different banal activities in an effort to illuminate supposed differences between the races. Thus the four performers featured in Spike Lee's utterly platitudinous film *The Original Kings of Comedy* informed us how blacks and whites resign from jobs differently, take breaks during work differently, seek adventure differently, react to crises differently, respond to bill collectors differently, and, most improbably, even enjoy science fiction films differently. "White people like space movies," Cedric the Entertainer comments. "Black people really don't do space like that." (It is mystifying how Lee could, in the span of a single year, mock Hollywood's persistent minstrelsy in *Bamboozled* and engage in that same minstrelsy with *The Original Kings of Comedy*.)

Tucker and Rock have also adopted Pryor's penchant for invoking one of the most powerful words in the English language, the word "nigger." Yet Pryor, like Dick Gregory before him, often attempted to strip the word of some of its ferocity; when he named his albums "Bicentennial Nigger" and "That Nigger's Crazy," it was genuinely startling and genuinely unburdening. In Tucker's and Rock's employment of the foul old term, however, there is not even an echo of subversion. Nor are they—in the manner of gays embracing "queer" as an appellation—attempting to give the word a new meaning. They are "nigger" traditionalists, preserving the word in its pejorative form. "Change the Joke and Slip the Yoke," Ralph Ellison suggested in his celebrated essay on folklore. But Tucker and Rock have left the yoke perfectly intact and slipped only the joke.

CHRIS TUCKER MUST have the most limited range in Hollywood, which is not exactly a haven of negative capability. In the last four years, he has played: a crazy, loud-mouthed, small-time ticket scalper in *Money Talks*; a crazy, loud-mouthed transvestite television host in *The Fifth Element*; a crazy, loud-mouthed petty criminal in *Jackie Brown*; and a crazy, loud-mouthed police officer in *Rush Hour*. These roles call for the sheerest coonery, and Tucker supplies it handily.



Bert Williams

COURTESY LAWRENCE HILL BOOKS

He seems to think that his roles endow him with a certain everyman quality that allows his audiences to see beyond racial lines. Leaving aside his mannered delivery for the moment, Tucker's scripts directly contradict this raceless self-assessment. In *Money Talks*, for example, he delivers several lines whose punch, such as it is, rests solely on racial grounds. When his boss wants him to scalp tickets to *The Phantom of the Opera*, Tucker responds that "black people don't want to see that shit." (The implication was not that blacks prefer *Don Giovanni*.) Later in the movie he emerges from a bathroom to complain that "the toilet wasn't clean, you dirty-ass white boy." Held at gunpoint by the film's villains, Tucker pleads: "Let's stop playing now. You can't shoot a nigger in his nuts. I need my nuts."

Repulsive as those lines are, Tucker's seminally offensive moment occurs in *Rush Hour*, his buddy flick with Jackie Chan. The movie, which billed itself as "the biggest mouth in the West" meeting "the fastest hands in the East," features Tucker at his bug-eyed, under-enunciating worst. The movie teems with reactionary gems, but the line that might have given even Hattie McDaniel pause comes when Chan switches the radio station from an R&B tune to the Beach Boys. An outraged Tucker shouts: "Don't you ever touch a black man's radio, boy! You can do that in China, but you get your ass kilt out here, man." Tuning the station to something he deems suitably black, Tucker immediately breaks into a bulging-eyed rendition of "the Snake," one of his several jigs during the film. The stereotype was never purer.

After completing *Rush Hour 2*, Tucker has said that he plans to work on a film about America's first black president. (The audience at the Image Awards also witnessed a shameless Bill Clinton joking with Tucker about who could rightfully lay claim to the title. "That's why I went to Harlem," Clinton rasped, "because I think I am the first black president.") Tucker says that he conceives of this upcoming film as a raceless one: "It will be funny for me to meet ambassadors, to pass laws. I'm a regular person, and in the movie I'll be a regular person who becomes president. People will like that I'm not going to stress the black aspects of playing the first black president." This movie promises to lack the transgression of even the old Irving Jones composition "When a Coon Sits in the President's Chair." And what exactly does Tucker mean by "the black aspects"? Surely there are many varieties of black aspects. In Tucker's universe, however, the choice seems to be between cartoonish blackness and no blackness at all.

Strangely, Tucker's racializing comedy has received praise for being precisely what it is not. Lynn Hirschberg, in a fawning profile in *The New York Times Magazine*, gushed that "Tucker's kind of comedy is not related to race. He is not topical—he, like Chaplin or Keaton, is just a funny character." Similarly, it is exceedingly odd to hear Tucker pronounce that "there is no racism," and that "I believe people just don't like people." This is odd not only because it is perfectly obvious that racism exists, but also because Tucker owes his

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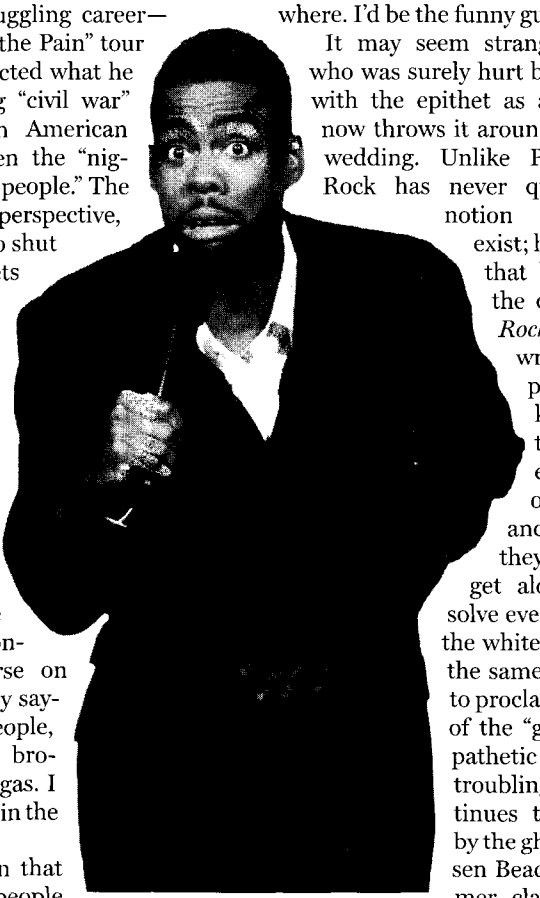
comedic success almost entirely to the reality of racial perceptions. Some people really don't like people; and Tucker is profiting from the traditions of this hostility. His comedy is a seemingly benign form of race-baiting. Charitably viewed, it aspires to teach us to laugh at ourselves; but the problem is that if we do not describe ourselves accurately, it is not exactly ourselves at whom we are laughing.

Hirschberg continued: "He is not particularly verbal, in the style of, say, Richard Pryor. Tucker likes to move—his characters bop and slide and spin." Hirschberg also contended that "Tucker is best when he is completely lost." But bopping, sliding, and spinning sounds awfully similar to shucking and jiving. And Tucker's acting "lost" finds its perfect antecedent in stereotyped humor. A relative of Stepin Fetchit's recounted his technique for getting discovered on the MGM lot: "He said he just stood there looking like he didn't know where he was or why he was there and he was scratching his head, which he had shaved clean, and he was just looking around like he was lost. I guess he looked so sad and lost and everything that he got their attention." In the world of television, it was this same ability to seem utterly "lost" that defined Lightnin' in *Amos 'n' Andy*. Of course, Tucker received $20 million for *Rush Hour 2*, so perhaps it is Hirschberg and the moviegoing public who are lost.

CHRIS ROCK SEEMS to know that there is a long and unpleasant history of black buffoonery in entertainment. "Black comedy is usually broader," Rock laments, "a lot of mugging and shit." He also freely acknowledges the limited scope of the comedy that Hollywood assigns to black actors: "Cerebral and black—that's hard to get. That's like an impossible concept for a white studio executive to get. 'Black and cerebral? Get the hell out of here! Black has to be over the top! Has to be slapstick!'" Rock claims that he feels so strongly about the coonery in Hollywood that he has resolved not to participate in projects that prey upon these vicious stereotypes. "The only stuff I won't do is clichés," Rock says. In his best-selling book *Rock This!*, Rock pleads with studio executives to cast him as a "normal guy" rather than rely upon racially fraught situations to drive the humor. "Hollywood keeps looking for another *Trading Places*," Rock complains. "They want something that plays with the black/white differences."

If only Rock's performance lived up to his high-mindedness. It wasn't so long ago, after all, that the man who has forsaken racial clichés played a shiftless, malingering bellhop in *Beverly Hills Ninja*. (The movie is even worse than its title suggests.) And his post-racialist protestations notwithstanding, Rock's latest movie, *Down to Earth*, over which he exercised creative control, turns completely on the black/white difference. Rock plays a young, poor, black stand-up comedian who, following his premature death, is forced to inhabit the body of an old, wealthy, white man. The film depicts such outlandish scenarios as a white man enjoying hip-hop and—gasp—a black man living in an expensive home. The comedy is owed entirely to the manipulation of such racial stereotypes.

Rock's most infamous bit—the one that resurrected his struggling career—came in his "Bring the Pain" tour in 1996. Rock dissected what he termed an ongoing "civil war" within the African American community, between the "niggas" and the "black people." The niggas, from Rock's perspective, cause dance clubs to shut down, fire bullets at movie screens, avoid reading for pleasure, rely upon welfare checks, and derive pride from never having been incarcerated. The black people, meanwhile, are defined only negatively: they are the ones who are not niggas. Rock concludes his discourse on this new civil war by saying, "I *love* black people, but I *hate* niggas, brother. Oh, I hate niggas. I wish they'd let me join the Ku Klux Klan."



Chris Rock

REUTERS

Rock's contention that at least some black people are not niggers leads logically to Senator Robert Byrd's recent comments during a videotaped interview: "There are white niggers. I've seen a lot of white niggers during my time—I'm going to use that word." (Presumably Senator Byrd is not familiar with Norman Mailer's old essay.) Rock's quest to narrow the definition of "nigger" and Byrd's effort to broaden the definition do nothing to challenge the intrinsic foulness of the word. While the comedian and the senator are both well intentioned, their old-time racist vocabulary undermines their anti-essentialist intention. Rock's "good" blacks and Byrd's "bad" whites are merely variations on the old nigger norm.

Predictably, Rock's use of the term "nigger" exposes deep-seated feelings of self-loathing. Growing up in Bedford-Stuyvesant during the late 1970s, Rock was bused to a white school in Gerretsen Beach. With white students constantly picking fights with him on account of his race, Rock's schooling experience conjures Little Rock in 1957. "I got beat up every day," Rock says. "I got called 'nigger' every day, girls and boys, every single day. Every day." Although Rock now jokes that the abuse "caused some mild psychological damage," he also cites this experience of racism as the defining factor in his becoming a comedian: "If I had gone to a black school, I'd have a normal job somewhere. I'd be the funny guy at work."

It may seem strange that Rock, who was surely hurt by being pelted with the epithet as an adolescent, now throws it around like rice at a wedding. Unlike Pryor, though, Rock has never questioned the notion that niggers exist; he decided only that he did not fit the description. In *Rock This!*, he writes: "White people don't know how to tell the difference between one black man and another. If they could, we'd all get along. It would solve everything. But to the white man, we're all the same." Rock's effort to proclaim himself one of the "good" blacks is pathetic and deeply troubling. Rock continues to be haunted by the ghosts of Gerretsen Beach; but his former classmates likely appreciate his material today. For his act often legitimates their racist view of the world.

In a 1998 *Vanity Fair* article that proclaimed Rock the "funniest man in America," he posed for a series of infamous photographs by Annie Leibowitz. They featured Rock sporting an ill-fitting tuxedo, white gloves, and, most jarringly, whiteface makeup. These photos, along with the civil war routine and some withering jokes about the efficacy of single mothers, have offended many blacks, who were outraged that even the notoriously irreverent Rock would refer to the dark age of minstrelsy with such apparent frivolity. A *Washington Post* columnist wondered, "What comedic purpose is served by photos that rummage roughly

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through blacks' old emotional baggage without greatly challenging *Vanity Fair*'s well-heeled, majority white readership? My sense is that certain white people who love Rock for taking black folks to task fervently wish other blacks would stop talking about race—or at least about racism." Rock responded to the criticism in his typical manner: by shrinking from the challenge and asserting that he is only a comedian. Rock defended the photos by asking: "Have we progressed to the point where a funny man doesn't have to be funny?" The naïveté sounds completely feigned. There was nothing even remotely humorous about those pictures; they were designed to shock, and thereby to bring the buzz his way. What neither Rock nor his critics noted, of course, is that the real scandal is not Rock's minstrel stunt for *Vanity Fair*, but his reliance upon minstrelsy and coon comedy in his work.

Rock, to be sure, is not incapable of making his comedy an instrument of incisive and hilarious social criticism. He rightly skewers the legions of people who offer Colin Powell the faint praise of calling him "well-spoken." "'Speaks well' is not a compliment," Rock insists. "It's what you say about retarded people who can barely talk. Why would people say that to Colin Powell? Did he have a stroke? He's a fucking educated man." Rock's criticism of the obsession with "black-on-black crime" is also on target: "Everybody robs their own people. Nobody goes someplace else to rob people. When you say black-on-black crime, you know what you're really saying? Crime is cool if you rob white people. There's no black-on-black crime. It's broke-on-broke crime." And his commentary on the outcome of the O. J. Simpson case was elegant and accurate: "Black people too happy; white people too mad."

These provocative remarks put one in mind of Pryor. And they make it all the more frustrating when Rock seeks shelter behind the cowardly "I'm just a comedian" defense. He should not apologize for his comedy's placing something vital at stake, but neither should he retreat at the first hint of criticism. Rock defends himself against his critics by arguing that anyone who takes his routine seriously is "just an idiot." Never mind that this is a nation of idiots. The important point is that Rock is playing it both ways: he wants to be caustic and he wants to be loved. "There's nothing controversial about it if people are laughing," he once remarked. Tucker said it more plainly: "Funny is funny." These statements undermine the subversive and transformative potential of comedy. They also make the racial humor of the two Chrises look more than a little opportunistic.

Materia Prima

She was to him as distance is to a traveler.
He was to her the three compass points not followed.
That is where the story ends,
And without a mention of *northwest* or *southeast*
Or *how far* or the *one thousand labors in between.*

The telling begins: *In that time....*
And each teller, who might tell the story, goes from there—
The lead, or bronze, or iron, white hot,
Is poured over the lip of such an overture,
And what we thought was the story,

What took the shape of the story,
vanishes like lost wax.

Eric Pankey

In his essay "The Shadow and the Act," Ralph Ellison finely articulated the powerful influence that popular culture can have on society. "In the struggle against Negro freedom," he argued, "motion pictures have been one of the strongest instruments for justifying some white Americans' anti-Negro attitudes and practices." Conditions for blacks have dramatically improved in the United States generally, and in Hollywood in particular, since Ellison penned those words in 1949. Yet they have not completely lost their bite, as coon comedy continues to thrive. And boycotting the entertainment industries—the NAACP's solution—would surely constitute an exercise in futility. As Ellison observed:

> To direct an attack upon Hollywood would indeed be to confuse portrayal with action, image with reality. In the beginning was not the shadow, but the act, and the province of Hollywood is not action, but illusion. Actually, the anti-Negro images of the films were (and are) acceptable because of the existence throughout the United States of an audience obsessed with an inner psychological need to view Negroes as less than men. Thus, psychologically and ethically, these negative images constitute justifications for all those acts, legal, emotional, economic and political, which we label Jim Crow. The anti-Negro image is thus a ritual object of which Hollywood is not the creator, but the manipulator. Its role has been that of justifying the widely held myth of Negro unhumanness and inferiority by offering entertaining rituals through which that myth could be reaffirmed.

Put simply, the coon shows and the coon movies of contemporary Hollywood would not be produced if they did not have some traction with the public. It is not, of course, only whites who enjoy these demeaning farces. Russell Simmons's *Def Comedy Jam*—the television show that gave Tucker his break—was most popular with blacks before it crossed over to a white audience. Martin Lawrence likewise owes his booming movie career to African American support for television coonery. The largely black audience before which *The Original Kings of Comedy* was filmed howls heartiest when the cooning is most pronounced. Perhaps many African American viewers have developed some sort of pop-cultural Stockholm Syndrome: having subsisted on a force-fed diet of coon images for such a long period, they have come to enjoy the taste. They certainly have not come to think critically about the subject.

One of the more discouraging aspects of Tucker's and Rock's popularity is that many commentators read it as a signal of the declining significance of race in America. In the *Los Angeles Times*, Patrick Goldstein argued: "Thanks to the enormous influence of hip-hop music, a generation of young white teenagers has become as colorblind about movies as they are about music." Goldstein's comparison is unwittingly apposite: hip-hop and coon comedy both commodify black stereotypes and pass them off as an expression of racial authenticity. Thus, a century after Bert Williams and George Walker formed Two Real Coons, rap group N.W.A. produced a song called "Real Niggaz." Hip-hop loves to believe that it is "keepin' it real"; but by extolling negative behavior among African Americans as the only genuine blackness, these comedians and many rappers are keepin' it surreal.

It is worth recalling that Williams and Walker had precious little control over their artistic destinies. Working as a black comedian in the early part of the twentieth century simply required cooning it up. Thankfully, this is no longer the case. But Tucker and Rock carry on as if social and

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cultural conditions in the United States remained unchanged. They possess real power in Hollywood, and they choose to squander that power by churning out retrograde trash. Their highly stylized and reactionary work obscures the rich and varied truth about black life in America today. Rock has complained that the pressure from blacks is stiflingly intense: "You have to be Martin Luther King with everything you do." He is wrong. No one is looking for racial uplift to emanate from comedy clubs. You don't have to be Martin Luther King. You don't even have to be Bill Cosby. You merely can't be Stepin Fetchit. ■

Why W. is no surprise.

The GOP, or Goldwater's Old Party

By SAM TANENHAUS

I.

THE EMERGENCE OF a combatively conservative George W. Bush has confounded many liberal observers. Where, they wonder, is the pragmatic centrist and bipartisan mediator (the "uniter") who smiled at us so reassuringly during the campaign? How does a not-quite-legitimate president, jimmied into office by a pliable Supreme Court, find the nerve to start rolling back the popular policies of the Clinton years? Shouldn't he be cautious, humble, conciliatory? What happened to the compassion in "compassionate conservativism"? What makes Bush so ideological all of a sudden?

This confusion is not Bush's, but his critics'. It is rooted in the belief—these days you might call it Jeffordsism—that the Republican Party rightfully and historically belongs to moderates. The truth is quite the opposite. Most Republican moderates were driven out of the party many years ago after a protracted fight that began in earnest in 1940 and culminated in 1964. In 1940, at the party's nominating convention, the GOP's East Coast power elite crowned Wendell Willkie, the "simple barefoot Wall Street lawyer" who endorsed Franklin Roosevelt's social policies and shared his internationalism. This was a slap at Old Guard Republicans, Midwestern isolationists who loathed the New Deal. To them Willkie was a muted FDR: "the Republican Quisling," according to the *Chicago Tribune*.

Willkie lost the election, but he prepared the way for other like-minded candidates in the years to come. In 1944 and 1948, the heartlanders favored Senator Robert Taft of Ohio, the eloquent archenemy of New Deal spending and wartime aid to Great Britain. Instead they got Thomas Dewey, the original compassionate conservative. In 1952, Taft came to the convention with enough delegates to claim the nomination. But once again the moderates prevailed, draping the mantle on the more electable Dwight Eisenhower. And the Republican victory in 1952 only sharpened the internal divide.

Once in office, Eisenhower confirmed the Old Guard's worst suspicions. Restrained in his anti-communism, he appointed the Harvard aristocrats James B. Conant and Charles Bohlen to sensitive foreign policy jobs, stopped Joseph McCarthy in his tracks, and invited Nikita Khrushchev to the United States. His accommodation to the New Deal was no less infuriating. He padded out the federal bureaucracy with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (Welfare!), and installed the progressive Earl Warren at the Supreme Court. Liberals, and the "New Conservatives" at the *New York Herald Tribune*, might have welcomed Eisenhower's centrism as proof that the country was maturing into its new role as a world power governed by a mandarinate of "wise men." For the right, however, Eisenhower was a betrayer. The most consistently popular of modern presidents, he made "moderate" a curse word within the GOP.

THE EIGHT YEARS of the Eisenhower administration fed the rebellion that climaxed with Barry Goldwater's presidential run in 1964. That event, which wrested control of the GOP from the East Coast elite and placed it firmly in the hands of the ideological activists who call the shots to this day, is the subject of Rick Perlstein's engaging book. Perlstein has grasped the first essential truth of the Goldwater Party, as Garry Wills once called it: it is a party aligned with a movement. Its preferred candidates are not ambitious career politicians—Richard Nixon, George H. W. Bush, Bob Dole—who assemble long résumés and pile up debts and obligations. They are tribunes—zealous amateurs whose talent is for giving voice to the party's "core" beliefs and regnant causes.

Perlstein begins not with Goldwater himself but with one of his early champions, Clarence "Pat" Manion. A Kentucky-born law professor at Notre Dame, Manion had been a staunch admirer of Franklin Roosevelt and the author of a textbook endorsing the New Deal in all its phases. It was published in 1939, the same year that war began in Europe. Roosevelt's interventionism sent Manion hurtling to the right. He joined the America First Committee and fumed against the growing encroachments of the federal government. In 1952, though still nominally a Democrat, he left Notre Dame Law School—he had become its dean—to campaign full-time for Taft.

When the usurper Eisenhower won, Manion was appointed chairman of a commission charged with reviewing the balance of power between the federal government and the states. He also testified in support of the Bricker Amendment, a

BEFORE THE STORM: BARRY GOLDWATER AND THE UNMAKING OF THE AMERICAN CONSENSUS
by Rick Perlstein
(Hill and Wang, 637 pp., $30)

SUBURBAN WARRIORS: THE ORIGINS OF THE NEW AMERICAN RIGHT
by Lisa McGirr
(Princeton University Press, 377 pp., $29.95)

THE RIGHT MOMENT: RONALD REAGAN'S FIRST VICTORY AND THE DECISIVE TURNING POINT IN AMERICAN POLITICS
by Matthew Dallek
(The Free Press, 273 pp., $25)

REAGAN, IN HIS OWN HAND
edited by Kiron K. Skinner, Annelise Anderson, Martin Anderson
(Free Press, 576 pp., $30)

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piece of legislation proposed by Taft's junior colleague from Ohio that would have erased the president's power to make treaties and all but severed American obligations to the United Nations. Fired by Eisenhower in early 1954, Manion promptly railed, in pitch-perfect McCarthyese, against "the left-wing Communists who have had an unfortunate effectiveness in this administration."

A few months later the Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, with its federal affront to states' rights, pushed Manion over the brink. He inaugurated a weekly radio broadcast, "The Manion Forum of Public Opinion," enlisting acquaintances and "family-owned manufacturers" to underwrite the venture. (Like so many free-marketeers then and since, Manion did not quite trust the vagaries of the marketplace when it came to spreading the gospel.) At the same time he cast about for an ideologue to challenge Eisenhower in 1956.

He settled on T. Coleman Andrews, a fellow casualty of the first Eisenhower administration who advocated the wholesale abolition of the income tax, another of the right's obsessions. Andrews made it onto the ballot in fifteen states, but his best showing on Election Day was a meager six percent in his home state of Virginia. So much for the no-tax platform. But another rebellion looked more promising. Court-ordered integration was meeting with "massive resistance" in the South. Manion, the Kentucky-Indianian, knew how little separated the Midwest and the South on this issue. Teaming up with a segregationist lawyer named Jim Johnson, he recruited a new candidate: Orville Faubus, the Arkansas governor who had refused to integrate Little Rock Central High School, forcing Eisenhower to send in the National Guard.

Since Faubus was a Democrat, Manion hedged his bets by seeking out a Republican, too. "When both candidates were turned back at their respective party conventions," Perlstein explains, "the two organizations would merge to form a new party to back one of the candidates—who, combining the votes of Dixiecrats and Taft Republicans, could finally block the major-party candidates from an electoral college majority." The scheme led Manion to the junior senator from Arizona, Barry Goldwater.

II.

GOLDWATER'S ATTRIBUTES WERE obvious. He was handsome, dashing, a World War II pilot who still flew his own plane. Elected to the Senate in 1952 from a historically Democratic state, he had instantly separated himself from the right-wing pack by his youth (he was born in 1909) and his charm. His first memorable speech was a ringing defense of McCarthy delivered during the censure debate of 1954. Three years later he had risen in an almost empty Senate chamber to attack Eisenhower's Keynesian budget, which, he said, "not only shocks me, but weakens my faith." He also picked a very public fight with the labor leader Walter Reuther.

All this spread Goldwater's fame on the right, and it did not hurt him in Arizona. During the 1958 off-year elections, a debacle for the GOP, Goldwater sailed through. Still, his record was not spotless. He had ended legal segregation in Phoenix's public schools and had twice voted for civil rights bills, in 1957 and 1960. He also supported a higher minimum wage and wanted to extend Social Security. But Goldwater opposed court-ordered integration, and in May 1959 he gave a speech in South Carolina in which he declared *Brown* unenforceable "by arms" because it was "not based on law." This speech won him so many fans in Dixie that Manion dropped Faubus and courted Goldwater alone.

COURTESY HILL AND WANG

Goldwater had no interest in running for president. He candidly judged himself unfit for the job, in part because he had left college after a single year. Yet he was ready and eager to lead an anti-government movement. Prodded by Manion, he pulled together a credo, a small book called *The Conscience of a Conservative*, which was published in time for the 1960 election. Actually its author was L. Brent Bozell, who had written speeches for McCarthy. Bozell wrote these words for Goldwater:

> I have little interest in streamlining government or in making it more efficient, for I mean to reduce its size. I do not undertake to promote welfare, for I propose to extend freedom. My aim is not to pass laws, but to repeal them. It is not to inaugurate new programs, but to cancel old ones that do violence to the Constitution, or that have failed in their purposes, or that impose on the people an unwarranted financial burden. I will not attempt to discover whether legislation is "needed" before I have first determined whether it is constitutionally permissible. And if I should be later attacked for neglecting my constituents' "interests," I shall reply that I was informed their main interest is liberty and that in that cause I am doing the very best I can.

The sentiments were familiar. But the almost total disdain for popular approval came as a revelation. It defied the model, created by Roosevelt and copied by Eisenhower (and later by Kennedy, Johnson, and Clinton), of the president as the author of benevolent policies that result in mass uplift and hence obliterate or overwhelm partisan differences, rendering ideology itself obsolete. Goldwater flatly rejected this ideal. When he testily remarked that the United States was a republic and not a democracy, he was drawing a distinction prized by conservative thinkers as diverse as Albert Jay Nock and Michael Oakeshott, even as he conveyed the movement's vision of a new governing class of "activists" who would translate the passive will of the voters into a prime asset. If the electorate is ideologically blank, then a few committed ideologues can seize control of the debate. This is the most enduring lesson of Goldwaterism—of its particular notion of politics as civic religion.

Its reasoning also underlies the movement's long-running anti-majoritarian insurgencies: the campaign to ban abortion, Newt Gingrich's "Contract With America," the tax revolts of Grover Norquist, and other causes. At the presidential level, it explains the paradox of Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush, both genial pitchmen with a gift for "selling" unpopular programs. For many years now, the GOP has tagged the Democratic Party as elitist, beholden to special interests; but Clinton, in his reign, consistently trimmed his programs to suit the Republican majority in Congress, confident that the result would give the public an approximation of what it wanted. His successor, by contrast, has begun his presidency by overtly serving his base—in particular, Sun Belt business interests—and trusting to good fortune, the market's "invisible hand," to provide the rewards that will placate the rest of us.

And if the invisible hand falters? Perhaps, like Reagan in 1984, George W.

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Bush will implore us to "stay the course." Perhaps he will simply assure us that "I am doing the very best I can." In any case, he will have moved nearer to the goal, making things easier for the next tribune. The activists, meanwhile, will constantly probe for new openings and look to claim any advantage. Thus, this past November, congressional Republicans did not idly await the outcome in Florida. They had operatives on the scene, intimidating the vote counters. And as soon as Bush's victory was ratified, GOP lawmakers, despite holding the slenderest of legislative majorities, proclaimed an age of restoration. Suddenly it was the 1980s again, as if Clinton's eight years had never happened, an impression the retreating Democrats seemed to confirm.

The Conscience of a Conservative was a best-seller, with half a million copies in print by Election Day. Goldwater didn't want the nomination and he didn't get it. It went to Richard Nixon, whom the right never fully trusted. He had served the cause brilliantly in his first years, nailing Alger Hiss in 1948 and then running a "tough" Senate campaign against Helen Gahagen Douglas in 1950. But as vice president he had seemed Eisenhower's errand boy, squandering much of his conservative capital. His main attraction was that he was not Nelson Rockefeller, the other top contender and the apotheosis of liberal Republicanism: another Quisling. When Nixon caved in to Rockefeller's demands for a more liberal party platform, he alienated party regulars. It would take him years to atone for this sin. Some would never forgive him.

The election of 1960 capped the age of bipartisan politics. The two major candidates ran as junior executives approved by Establishment elders. John F. Kennedy came complete with a Cambridge accent and high oratory in the Adlai Stevenson vein. Nixon, too, posed as a gray-flanneled insider, with the Brahmin Henry Cabot Lodge as his running mate. The candidates' positions were all but interchangeable. Indeed, by the strangely fluid rules of the new consensus, Kennedy, the cold war Democrat, outflanked Nixon on the right by decrying a phantom "missile gap" and thirsting for aggressive solutions to the new Communist problem posed by Fidel Castro.

Kennedy took office looking like the future; but, "vigor" aside, his program resembled his much older predecessor's. Like Eisenhower, Kennedy operated outside or "beyond" ideology. He put moderate Republicans such as Douglas Dillon in the Cabinet, and he confidently remarked that the most pressing issues were in reality "technical," "administrative" problems that could be broken down and solved with managerial efficiency by the likes of Robert McNamara, lately of the Ford Motor Company, and McGeorge Bundy, the whiz-kid Harvard dean. Kennedy's youth and popularity masked his true identity as a holdover of an outmoded politics. He was the final, most fragile link in the patrician-reformist chain that stretched back to Woodrow Wilson and the two Roosevelts. Like them, he built his career on the strength of a canny alliance with a hard-grinding political machine. In Kennedy's case, the machine was his own family and its extended network of "Irish mafia."

III.

What few could foresee was that after Kennedy no other Northerner would capture the White House. The nation was undergoing a profound demographic transformation that would leave the Democrats ideologically unmoored for a generation to come. From Lyndon Johnson onward, every Democratic president has been a Southerner forced to run, or to govern, as a cultural scalawag. Jimmy Carter took the South in 1976, but then he failed to hold it. Clinton held chunks of it, but he could not deliver even Arkansas for his hand-picked successor, Al Gore, who suffered the indignity of capturing the national vote but failing in the Electoral College because he was rejected by his home state. To Tennesseans, Gore was a Harvard-Washington man, an outsider. It is a puzzle that the Democrats have yet to solve.

But the GOP had no such trouble. The politics of the Old Guard flourished in the Sun Belt, with its large population of transplanted Midwesterners. Goldwater, the first big-time Southwestern politician, played very well among the region's conservatives. "The epicenter of Southern California conservatism—Orange County—took the lead in mobilizing the groundswell for Goldwater," writes Lisa McGirr in *Suburban Warriors*. "In 1964 the region from Fullerton to Laguna Beach, Yorba Linda to Irvine was Goldwater country." Goldwater's vote totals there would be surpassed only in the Deep South.

McGirr's closely researched monograph describes the emergence of Orange County as a hive of political activism in the 1960s. She wisely refrains from presenting the region as a stand-in for broader suburban trends. Instead she stresses the "atypical vibrancy of its conservative movement." Along this sunstruck frontier, squeezed in between ocean and desert, a new class of middle man-

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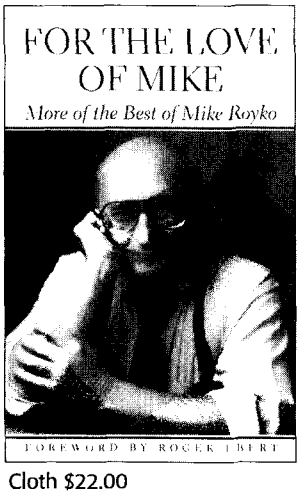
More of the Best of Mike Royko

With a Foreword by Roger Ebert



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—Henry Kisor, *Chicago Sun-Times*

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agers at defense-related companies such as Hughes Aircraft and Ford Aeronutronics thrived alongside real estate speculators and "ranchers-turned-property developers." These beneficiaries of the cold war economy exhibited cold war anxieties. Menace again seemed to be stalking the peaceful streets, even infiltrating the cozy ranch houses:

> At living-room bridge clubs, at backyard barbecues, and at kitchen coffee klatches, the middle-class men and women of Orange County "awakened" to what they perceived as the threats of communism and liberalism. Sensing an urgent need for action, they forged study groups, multiplied chapters of national right-wing organizations, and worked within the Republican Party to make their voices heard.

What, exactly, did they find so frightening? For a start, there was the presence of subversive intruders. In the summer of 1960 an Anaheim resident named Joel Dvorman, "New York-born, liberal, Jewish, and Yale-educated," and a member of the American Civil Liberties Union, had a backyard get-together. The featured guest was Frank Wilkinson, a left-wing activist and accused Communist from San Francisco who had protested against the House Un-American Activities Committee. The event, writes McGirr,

> outraged a number of residents who heard about the meeting and decided to attend. James Wallace, a production supervisor at Autonetics, a local aerospace firm, was one of them. He learned of the meeting about an hour before it started: "Having heard many derogatory things about the ACLU, and being mildly curious about what an identified communist might have to say, I decided to attend. I was very upset to find this thing going on in our neighborhood." Returning home, he wrote a letter to the editor of the [Orange County] *Register*... calling Wilkinson a "traitor" and issuing a call to action: "I wonder what we would have done in 1942 if Mr. Dvorman had a German-American Bund meeting at his house."

Having at last laid eyes on an "identified Communist," James Wallace started the first chapter of Anaheim's John Birch Society.

Today the society, which was established in 1958, is best remembered for the demented conspiracy theories of its founder Robert Welch, who concluded on the basis of his own systematic research that Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles were agents of the Kremlin. Welch lived in Massachusetts, and his operation was headquartered there; but his following was strongest in the Midwest and especially the Southwest, home to so many of the "wealthy businessmen, retired military officers and little old ladies in tennis shoes" who swelled the Birchers' ranks, according to a report by California's attorney general issued in 1961. "By the end of 1962, there were more than eight [Birch] chapters in Santa Ana, five in Anaheim, five in Costa Mesa, three in Garden Grove, and five in Newport Beach," writes McGirr. "In all of Orange County, thirty-eight chapters... flourished, with an estimated membership of 800." At its peak, in 1965, there were some ten thousand Birchers in the state, and five thousand in Orange County alone—enough to commandeer the California Republican Assembly, a volunteer group whose endorsement was crucial to candidates seeking higher office.

Southern California was fertile ground, too, for Fred Schwarz's School of Anti-Communism. Schwarz was an Australian physician and lay pastor who traveled the Southwest explaining how the Russian people had been subdued by "the techniques of animal husbandry" and warning that the Soviets planned to raise the hammer and sickle in every American city. In June 1961, Orange County school boards excused seven thousand students from class so that they might attend Schwarz's "Youth Day," sponsored by local businessmen. Months later Schwarz drew fifteen thousand to a five-day teach-in at the Los Angeles Sports Arena. Shortly afterwards, at an event at the Hollywood Bowl paid for by some of California's largest corporations, C. D. Jackson, the *Life* magazine publisher who had been a speechwriter for Eisenhower, took the stage "to proffer a groveling apology for running an article critical of Dr. Schwarz," as Perlstein reports.

McGirr is probably right that these nutty goings-on, chilling though many found them at the time, were relatively harmless. Few Birchers took Welch's cracked theology seriously. For most members the society was a right-wing Rotary Club. Its structure, consciously modeled on the Communist Party all the way down to its small "cells," brought fellowship to the lonely crowd in Orange County's exfoliating suburbs. McGirr resists the "lunatic fringe" argument that depicts Birchers as spiritual kin to the dazed misfits in Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust*. On the contrary, says McGirr, they were well educated and well adjusted, "housewives, doctors, dentists, engineers."

This is not really surprising. Extremist movements often attract upstanding citizens. In fact, they depend on them. This is what led Richard Hofstadter, in the days after McCarthy's downfall, to speculate about deep nihilistic strains woven into the American national character. He proposed a theory of "status politics": Americans fixated on Reds, real and imagined, and were driven not by political concerns, but by social and psychological ones. The true "enemies within" were East Coast patricians.

This analysis emerged from Hofstadter's critical study of twentieth-century American populist movements, which he saw as being anti-urban, anti-Semitic, anti-intellectual, and occasionally paranoid. In Hofstadter's view, they finally embodied a "fundamentalist revolt against modernity." When he revisited the subject in 1962, Hofstadter suggested a different term, "cultural politics," which remains part of our vocabulary. "In our political life," he wrote,

> there have always been certain types of cultural issues, questions of faith and morals, tone and style, freedom and coercion, which become fighting issues. To choose but one example, prohibition was an issue of this kind during the twenties and early thirties. In the struggle over prohibition, economic interests played only the most marginal role; the issue mobilized religious and moral convictions, ethnic habits and hostilities, attitudes toward health and sexuality, and other personal preoccupations. There are always such issues at work in any body politic, but perhaps they are particularly acute and important in the United States because of our ethnic and religious

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> heterogeneity . . . they loom larger during periods of prosperity, when economic conflicts are somewhat muted, than they do during periods of depression and economic discontent. Hard times mobilize economic group antagonisms; prosperity liberates the public for the expression of its more luxurious hostilities.

McGirr disagrees. Orange County right-wingers, she maintains, were optimistic and at ease in a changing world. They "enjoyed the fruits of consumer culture, reveled in their worldly success, and, for the most part, found the suburban world of tract homes, private developments, and decentralized living to their liking." They were also, McGirr contends, in tune with their times—normal representatives of a broader culture which, like them, was "virulently anticommunist."

That phrase appears many times in her book, the two words paired so often that they form a single term. For McGirr, all anti-communism is virulent. Perhaps this explains why she ignores the Birchers' excesses, the violent imagery and the lurid language in which they trafficked routinely. We must turn to Perlstein to learn that in 1962 the society planted billboards on California highways with the legends "Wanted For Impeachment For Giving Aid and Comfort to the Communist Conspiracy" and "The Mortal Enemy of the United States and the American People." But Perlstein and McGirr both share the belief, prevalent today among academic historians and their journalistic followers, that the Birchers and others were guilty of no greater crime than taking the true villains, the liberal anti-Communists, at their word.

True, the progenitors of the New Frontier and the Great Society somewhat overdid the Soviet threat, a mistake that led, tragically, to the war in Vietnam. Yet this did not prevent them from trying strenuously to redress social injustices at home. And there was no contradiction in this. They believed that the struggle against communism could be waged effectively only if the United States improved its domestic record, specifically in the areas of civil rights and poverty. Progress at home would mean that the Western democracies had better answers than the Soviets did, and might therefore win over converts in contested areas of the globe.

The conservatives who rallied behind Goldwater plausibly rejected this argument on the grounds that it ceded too much, morally, to communism. Why fret about limited inequities at home when millions behind the Iron Curtain were being brutally deprived of "civil rights"? Didn't the Democrats' social agenda acquiesce in the pro-Soviet claim that the differences between free nations and captive ones were negligible or non-existent? Conservatives also maintained—again, plausibly—that the growing welfare state, with its "planned economy," grew out of the same coercive and "collectivist" tendencies that had led other nations down "the road to serfdom."

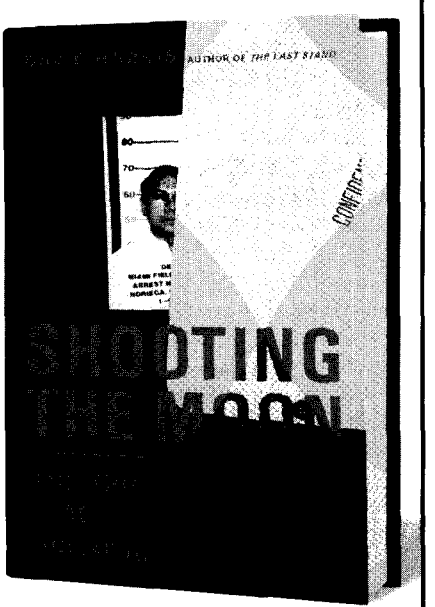
These differences amounted to much more than a sectarian quarrel among like-minded fanatics. They resulted in a remarkably coherent national debate. The Marshall Plan and NATO were buffeted by this clash of viewpoints. So was American policy in the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. Domestically, the conflict fed the social and cultural tensions so disturbing to Hofstadter but never quite grasped by McGirr. She rightly points out that the Orange County right-wingers launched a "direct attack on 'liberal humanism' and the 'open society,'" but she fails to note that the forms this protest took belie her rather simplistic account of upwardly mobile Americans brimming with optimism and self-confidence. As her own research shows, the cheerful "kitchen table activists" repeatedly embarked on fiercely punitive campaigns: chasing left-wing Jews off school boards, cleansing classrooms of unwholesome textbooks, penning blacks in neighborhoods far from Orange County.

Hofstadter was mistaken to call these "luxurious hostilities." On the contrary, they grew out of the "suburban warriors'" deepest insecurities. And not only in Orange County. Thus Perlstein describes the campaign tour that Lady Bird Johnson bravely made in 1964, in the vain hope of reminding voters in the Deep South that she and her husband were Southerners, too. At a stop in Columbia, South Carolina, "the space in front of the platform at the mall was monopolized by the massed forces of the local John Birch Society chapters—and their children, who bore signs reading 'Black Bird Go Home'; 'Johnson Is a Communist'; 'Johnson Is a Nigger-Lover.'" Once "Communist" became interchangeable with "Nigger-Lover," the anxieties of the New Right were no longer latent. They had emerged into plain view, and they became an integral feature of electoral politics.

IV.

By ordinary standards, Barry Goldwater's campaign was a fiasco. He lost by a greater margin than anyone before or since: he got twenty-seven million votes (thirty-nine percent) to Lyndon Johnson's forty-three million (sixty-one percent). Yet even before Kennedy's assassination it looked as if no Republican candidate stood a chance

"IT'S ALL HERE—
drug lords,
the CIA,
Ollie North,
presidents and generals tripping over each other in a grand comic tragedy."
—Evan Thomas, author of *Robert Kennedy: His Life*



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against him in 1964. So it had appeared to Nixon, who took himself out of contention in 1962 by mounting an ill-conceived campaign for governor of California in which he was attacked not only by liberal Democrats but—for the first time—by the far right, after he denounced the Birchers. At the time Nixon was accused of using the California race as a stepping-stone to the White House, although "the truth was the other way around," as Stephen Ambrose notes in his biography of Nixon. "[He] viewed the governorship as a way to avoid the Republican nomination." The only zealous contender was Rockefeller, with his bottomless treasury that made Republican activists hate him all the more. Goldwater was so reluctant to run that the team who orchestrated his nomination kept their plans secret from him for many months.

And yet it was in some respects an ideal time to mount a right-wing campaign. The elections of 1962, occurring against the backdrop of sit-ins and Freedom Rides, showed Republicans gaining strength in the South, just as Manion had foreseen. Soon Strom Thurmond, the Dixiecrat candidate for president in 1948, would join the GOP. When Kennedy announced that he would protect James Meredith, who courageously broke the color barrier at the University of Mississippi, Goldwater's challenge was direct. "We haven't turned over to the federal government the power to run the schools," he declared. "I don't like segregation. But I don't like the Constitution kicked around, either."

In the next two years the man who desegregated schools in Phoenix would become a fierce advocate of "free association" and "property rights." Then he opposed Johnson's sweeping Civil Rights Act of 1964 on the advice of two legal experts, William Rehnquist and Robert Bork, who assured him that the bill was unconstitutional. Taking the Senate floor, Goldwater explained that it would create a police state. "Of the genuine police state in the nation's midst—Mississippi—he said nothing at all," Perlstein dryly remarks.

Goldwater was now the paragon of the Republican right, as large a figure as Taft had been and far more dynamic. What remained was the task of getting him the nomination. The best pages in Perlstein's book describe how this was accomplished. The hero of the tale is the lanky, bow-tied strategist F. Clifton White, a onetime Cornell professor and veteran of the Young Republican National Federation who delighted in the carefully managed tedium of the long electoral march. Leasing a suite atop the Chanin Building across from Grand Central Station, he began amassing delegates state by state, precinct by precinct, chit by chit, building an insurmountable lead against Rockefeller, not to mention William Scranton and George Romney, both moderate saviors sent up by the panicked East Coast establishment.

White and his ally William Rusher of *National Review* were unfazed by these liberal challenges. They knew that the Wall Street faction was hopelessly out of step. Why waste time and money pursuing voters already locked up by the urban Democratic machine when the GOP could realign itself along the axis of the new "South-West-Midwest coalition" of angry "forgotten" Americans? From their redoubt in midtown Manhattan, they sketched the outline of the Republican base that is intact to this day: the massive red sea that covered the post-election maps in November 2000, lapping up against narrow blue beachheads on the two coasts and around the Great Lakes. In our post-1964 age, Taft country plus the Southwest plus the Deep South still equals Republican victory.

Goldwater's candidacy ushered in the sequence of Sun Belt conservatives who captured six of the next nine presidential elections: Nixon (the "New Nixon" of 1968 turned out to be not more liberal, as some hoped, but a more temperate Goldwater), Reagan, and the Bushes. All were or are hybrid figures. Nixon and Reagan had Midwestern roots. The Bushes are transplanted New Englanders; and these blurred identities made them all the more ardent in their adopted regionalism, and paralleled the population's westward motion and ceaseless self-invention. Only Goldwater, half-Jewish (on his father's side) and the descendant of Arizona's most powerful merchant family, was authentically a Westerner. Goldwater wondered if his Jewish name would alienate voters, but his champions shrewdly—and commendably—presented it as proof that the New Right, whatever its other prejudices, had outgrown the anti-Semitism that had disfigured both parties during the pre-World War II years and then resurfaced in the first stages of the cold war.

PERLSTEIN'S ENTHUSIASM FOR Goldwater the man is infectious. He makes us see how immensely likable he was, with his physical energy, his love of Navajo culture, his unpretentious hobbies. He was a skilled photographer and a ham radio buff. He tooled around Washington in his "two-seat Thunderbird, the dashboard built to look like a jet cockpit." Twice a year he flew to Michigan "to buy the new Heathkit electric hobby kits the day they came off the line." Unlike the glad-handing and hammy Rockefeller, with his cloying blintzes, Goldwater the frontier aristocrat hated whistle-stop kitsch. Forced in Georgia to taste Gold Water, a homemade soft drink, he spat it out: "This tastes like piss! I wouldn't drink it with gin!" Nor did he savor the machinations of Clif White, who was plotting Goldwater's nomination even as the non-candidate told the *Chicago Tribune*, "Doggone it, I'm not even sure I've got the brains to be president of the United States."

Eminently sensible, Goldwater did not want a team of starry-eyed operators mortgaging his political future on a crusade that, after Kennedy was assassinated, looked increasingly futile. Lee Harvey Oswald had the same impact on the Goldwater insurgency that Timothy McVeigh would have on Newt Gingrich's insurgency in 1995. This wasn't logical, of course. After all, Oswald suited everyone's description of a Communist malcontent. Yet Kennedy's murder pivoted public sentiment against right-wingers, who strangely collaborated in the process by wallowing in collective near-guilt. "My God, one of those Birchers did it," Goldwater's press secretary Tony Smith groaned to Denison Kitchel, the campaign manager, either unaware or momentarily forgetting that Kitchel was a Bircher of long standing. Only Goldwater refused to join the chorus. Oswald's act, he declared, "was a product of the sort of hate taught by Communists, not by Americans." It was a defensible argument. Yet the mood had turned, and it was exactly the wrong thing to say.

This was true of many of Goldwater's campaign utterances. His gaffes and his

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misstatements were soon legendary. A dreadful candidate ill at ease begging for votes, he made things worse by stubbornly concealing his "human" side. "This is going to be a campaign of principles, not personalities," he growled to a young staffer. "I don't want that kind of Madison Avenue stuff, and if you try it, I will kick your ass out of this office." For better or worse, Goldwater cared only for the ideas that he espoused. He was leading a movement, not looking for a better job.

SNUBBING WHITE, HE put his cronies Kitchel and Richard Kleindienst (later Nixon's attorney general) in charge of the primaries. The tone was set, comically, in New Hampshire. Launching his campaign on *Meet the Press*, Goldwater, pained horribly by an injured foot, rambled incoherently. He identified the political scientist Hans Morgenthau as "one of the greatest physicists in the world," and claimed that John Kennedy had sent federal marshals rather than federal troops to Mississippi. He also explained that the United States "spent one hundred twelve or one hundred fifteen years experimenting with socialism and communism and egalitarianism and monarchy and everything else, [before] arriving at our constitutional republic."

The primary was won by a last-minute entrant, Henry Cabot Lodge, then the ambassador to South Vietnam. Goldwater finished a distant second, only two percentage points ahead of Rockefeller. He came in third in Oregon, behind Rockefeller and Lodge. In California, he squeaked past Rockefeller only because the Orange County loyalists pushed him over the top. It didn't really matter. White had sewn up most of the delegates behind the scenes. Goldwater went into San Francisco as the prohibitive choice.

The GOP convention, held in the Cow Palace, unfolded as if to a Democratic script. The tumult resembled a mob scene. Rockefeller was all but howled off the stage. An anti-extremism platform amendment, proposed by Romney, was lustily rejected by voice vote. Police converged on NBC newsman John Chancellor while the cameras rolled. When Eisenhower defended Goldwater against "sensation-seeking columnists and commentators," spectators (assumed by many to be delegates) sprang from their seats, apparently poised to storm the glass broadcast booths suspended high above them. The climax was Goldwater's acceptance speech, with its infamous peroration: "Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice. Moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue."

By the time of the general election, Johnson, with the help of the compliant media, easily caricatured Goldwater as Dr. Strangelove (the film was a hit that year) itching to get his finger on the nuclear trigger. Others lumped Goldwater with George Wallace, the Alabama governor who had taunted liberals with unattractive truths about de facto segregation in the North and then rolled up huge vote totals in Democratic primaries in Wisconsin and Indiana. Meanwhile Goldwater's message was sabotaged from within by Birch-style tracts such as Phyllis Schlafly's *A Choice Not an Echo*, which accused liberal Republicans, "secret kingmakers based in New York," of conspiring to prop up the Soviets as a pretext for advancing socialism at home. As the reality of a colossal defeat sank in, Goldwater's speeches, which had been excruciatingly dull, now became, says Perlstein, "sheer extrusions of rage" against Johnson and the American public. The campaign left many with the image of Goldwater as, in Norman Mailer's words, "blind in politics, impolite in tactics, a sorehead, a fool, a disaster."

PERLSTEIN RETELLS THIS story with energy and skill. He has dug into many sources without getting lost in them. His vibrant, detailed narrative moves swiftly and brings a large cast to life. He is especially good on Manion and White, making the reader feel the force of their animating ideas and passions. But his book is oddly thin on the ideas themselves. At times Perlstein indulges in cheesy, generalized set-pieces that cheapen the ideas they try to dramatize:

> On the first day of June 1959, you received a letter marked confidential from Clarence Manion of South Bend, Indiana. Manion was a conservative lecturer and weekly radio commentator, one of the most stirring you had ever heard. You opened a letter from Manion eagerly. It invited you to join a "Goldwater Committee of 100" to draft Barry Goldwater, the junior senator from Arizona, for President. You put it down. Goldwater in the White House—Goldwater winning the Republican nomination—was an incredible, impossible notion. You sent Clarence Manion a letter, on the stationery with your factory's and Manhattan office's address on the top, telling him that you wished him well, but that this was a lost cause, hopeless, that a conservative would never win the Republican nomination as long as you lived. You were an old man, tired, and you were through with fighting impossible battles.
>
> Five years later, when you watched Barry Goldwater accept the 1964 Republican nomination for President with tears in your eyes, you wondered how it could possibly have come about.

Or this:

> Think of a college bookstore perhaps at one of the new universities in California, its sprawling, bland, concrete campus as big as a medium-sized town. Imagine a pimply college freshman wandering in. He is wearied from his first soul-crushing run-in with Big Bureaucracy, after complying with the procedures for securing his place in next semester's classes. After purchasing the closely printed required reading texts for the major he had just been compelled to declare, his eyes alight upon the red, white, and blue cover of *Conscience of a Conservative*. He picks it up, weighs it in his hand—127 pages, large type, space between each little paragraph. He turns it over and sees a handsome, serious, welcoming face: the shoulders of a sharp, well-cut suit are visible, the tie reed-slender in the current style. He opens the book and, standing, reads fourteen short pages inviting him to join an idealistic struggle to defend the individual against the encroachments of the mass.

These empathic intrusions patronize subject and reader alike. Perlstein has captured the emotional and psychological aspects of his story; but tears and pimples cannot do the work of analysis and explanation.

The factual errors that Perlstein makes are minor but revealing. He asserts that the lowest estimated figure for the Birch Society's national membership, twenty thousand, "was greater than the membership of the Communist Party in its 1930s heyday." In fact, the CPUSA had three or four times that number at its peak in 1939, and as many as a million Americans passed through the party in the 1930s and 1940s. He says that William Buckley is one of six children, when he is the sixth of ten. He refers to Whittaker Chambers's "upstate retreat," meaning, apparently, upstate New York; but Chambers's farm was in Westminster, Maryland.

Perlstein, in short, appears to have only a glancing acquaintance with the larger arc of modern conservatism and its intellectual foundations. Thus, while Buckley the man charmingly glides through the narrative, there is next to nothing on his influential writings from this period—especially his book *Up From Liberalism*, which offered a penetrating criticism of moderate Republicanism and cogently laid out the case for a Goldwater-style insurgency as early as 1959 (and had an introduction written by Goldwater).

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Even stranger, Perlstein seems unfamiliar with Garry Wills's *Nixon Agonistes*, which remains the finest and most far-reaching examination of the political convulsions of the 1960s and the first account to identify strains of Goldwaterism in the GOP as a whole. Still, these defects only mar Perlstein's book, they do not seriously damage it. *Before the Storm* is a substantial achievement.

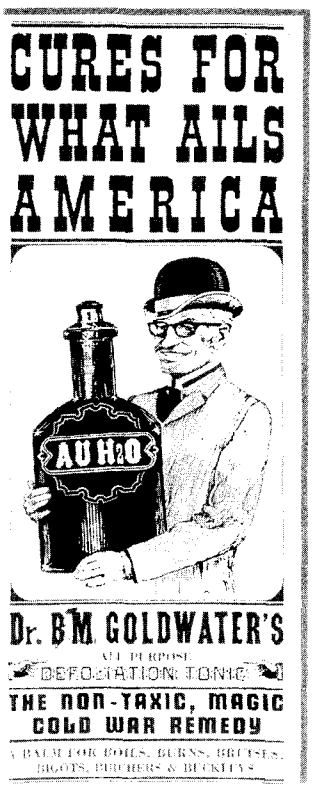
V.

GOLDWATER LOST THE election in 1964, but it appears that he won the war of ideas. There is scarcely a politician to be found today who supports the expanded welfare state that Johnson envisioned, while Goldwater's anti-government message continues to resonate. The law-and-order themes that sounded so extreme in 1964 have become staples of Republican dogma. Nixon's odes to the "silent majority" in 1968 echoed Goldwater's "forgotten man," and his "Southern strategy" courted the same white "backlash" voters that gave Dixie to Goldwater by huge margins. Reagan, the most devout Goldwater acolyte, erected his career on the foundations of Goldwater's campaign. Even the more restrained Bushes borrowed from Goldwater's arsenal. George Bush's infamous Willie Horton ads in 1988 were lifted from Goldwater's political and ideological playbook. And a dozen years later the current occupant of the White House drummed home the "morality" issue that Goldwater harped on as Election Day closed in.

Goldwater's vast army of volunteers—3.9 million, says Perlstein, twice as many as worked for Johnson—included activists who are with us still. While Scranton, Romney, and Lodge, all illustrious names in 1964, have faded from public memory, the Goldwaterite Bork would have an important part in the Nixon and the Reagan years. And in a few short weeks last autumn the Goldwaterite Rehnquist surpassed the kingmaking efforts of the entire Wall Street cabal. The Goldwater legacy endures, in sum, because it inspired a new generation.

The comparison with Kennedy is instructive. The Kennedy myth, reinforced by his martyrdom, was that he was a Pied Piper who captivated American youth. Had he lived, it is said, we might have been spared the campus insurrections of the 1960s. Maybe. But maybe not. Kennedy offered idealistic programs meant to inspire the young, such as the Peace Corps, and his call to shake up the complacent quietism left over from the 1950s was heeded by future politicians such as Bill Clinton and Al Gore; but as Wills pointed out long ago, "the incontrovertible point of campus revolt [was that] it came about *under* Kennedy, during a liberal regime, when youth was hopeful and the Establishment looked permeable by new ideas ... the Bay of Pigs had occurred, [C. Wright] Mills had written, young men like [Tom] Hayden had listened, SDS and SNCC were founded, the Port Huron Statement was adopted—all these things happened *before* Kennedy's death."

Goldwater, by contrast, really did inspire the young. *The Conscience of a Conservative* was received as scripture by the Young Americans for Freedom, or YAF, the conservative organization formed on Buckley's family estate in Sharon, Connecticut in 1960. A seedbed of Goldwaterism, YAF "added 5,400 recruits in the summer of 1964, compared to SDS's total membership of 1,500," Perlstein notes. To these young believers, Goldwater had the virtue of seeming beyond partisanship. "[He] attacked not only liberals and Democrats, but Republicans as well," writes John A. Andrew III in *The Other Side of the Sixties*, another recent book that fruitfully examines the origins of the New Right. "This gave his message a principled purity that sharply contrasted with other rhetoric [in 1960]. He attacked not only Democratic spending, but Republican spending, for accelerating the trend toward statism. Goldwater articulated a systemic attack, one that could only lead to fundamental structural reform. And, almost by definition, the proponents of that change would have to be ideologues."



Goldwater's presence—and his twenty-seven million votes—meant that at least one of the two major parties was not completely out of touch. The Democrats offered no comparable figure, and the absence would be felt keenly on the left. Long after Hayden and Company gave up on electoral politics and took up street theater and "happenings," New Right radicals were diligently mastering the mechanics of the two-party system, making it the vehicle of their insurgency. The result is that they remain a force in contemporary politics.

Goldwater, the "surreal anti-candidate," in Wills's phrase, begat Reagan and the younger Bush, each surreal in his own way. Like Goldwater, they would be openly mocked for their apparent ignorance and incuriosity. But the notion of the president as "smart," as a middle-aged National Merit Scholar, is almost wholly a Democratic fixation. Republicans have avoided the type ever since the hyper-intelligent technocrat Herbert Hoover pitched them into oblivion in 1929. Nixon, the one highly educated Republican president of the past half-century, carefully suppressed this side of his character, all too aware that the party distrusts a president too comfortable ruling the bureaucracy that he has been elected to dismantle or too much at ease in the company of "a little intellectual elite in a far-distant capital," as Reagan described them at the outset of his political career.

Like Goldwater, Reagan was recruited to run for high office—was plucked, as it happened, from the ashes of the Goldwater movement. As soon as Goldwater went down, Reagan emerged as the right's new tribune. The story of his rise is ably told by Matthew Dallek in his well-researched chronicle of Reagan's extraordinary run for the California governorship in 1966, a victory nearly as total as Goldwater's loss. By crushing the incumbent Edmund "Pat" Brown, a star of the Democratic Party's liberal wing, Reagan rescued Goldwaterism and made it the dominant force in the modern GOP (Goldwater's Old Party, you might call it), and in the politics of the past thirty-five years.

At the time, Reagan hardly seemed a match for Brown, a two-time incumbent who in his last race had whipped Richard Nixon only two years after Nixon had come within one hundred thousand votes of the presidency. The prospect of Reagan in Sacramento, governing the nation's most populous state, was even more far-fetched than a Goldwater presidency. A registered Republican only since 1962, he was still hosting *Death Valley Days*. Not that he was a political neophyte: he had been president of the Screen Actors Guild during a time of intense labor strife, and after his film career foundered he gave hundreds of speeches and talks for General Electric, crisscrossing the country. Impressively free of the actor's presumed vanity, he exhibited the discipline of the box-office star who adroitly concocts a

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persona tailored to the public appetite—in this instance, the appetite for a "citizen politician," complete with unrevealing flashes of "warmth" and humor.

Dallek reminds us just how much of an extremist Reagan was in the 1960s. A featured speaker at Fred Schwarz's teach-ins, he had stumped in 1962 on behalf of his "warm personal friend" John Rousselot, a Southern California congressman who was the pride of the John Birch Society. He also "seemed only [*sic*] happy to appear on stage with some of the most reactionary men in American politics," Dallek writes. The segregationists Orville Faubus and Ross Barnett of Mississippi "both gave Reagan awards for his steadfast devotion to public service, and Charlton Lyons, another Jim Crow Southerner, enjoyed support from Reagan while running for governor of Louisiana." When Nelson Rockefeller hired the California GOP consultants Stu Spencer and Bill Roberts to run the California primary in 1964, they compiled a list of Goldwater's "fringe backers." Reagan ranked number twenty-two, with the notation: "Another Liberty Amendment stalwart."

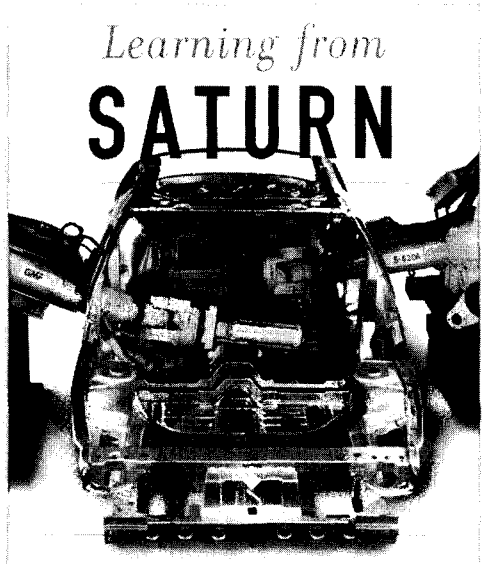
At the Cow Palace in 1964, Reagan was an alternate delegate who could be seen wearing a pin that read "A Choice Not an Echo." After the Republican loss in November, Reagan decried the moderate GOP "traitors" who had sold Goldwater out: "We will have no more of those candidates who are pledged to the same Socialist goals of our opposition and who seek our support." Yet he was a sunny ideologue, compared with Goldwater's glowering. And his Henry Hill-like salesman delivery was soothing. "A Time for Choosing," his famous plea on behalf of Goldwater, was his standard GE oration, honed in many performances; televised a week before Election Day, it sent viewers into raptures and brought in an estimated $8 million in donations.

RUNNING FOR GOVERNOR in 1966, Reagan remodeled himself as expertly as any candidate in memory. Today it is almost impossible to find a hard-core early Reaganite disappointed by the affable mien that he later adopted, or by the many compromises that he made as president: the massive deficits, the programs that he promised to slash but never did, the crimes of Iran-Contra, the friendly tête-à-tête with Mikhail Gorbachev. Reagan smoothed his ideological edges with a performer's honest respect for his audience. When Goldwater sent him a letter in 1965 offering his assistance in the Republican primary, Reagan replied graciously, even fawningly, but he did not take him up on the offer. After 1964, he knew that an association with Goldwater would be the kiss of death. Once Spencer and Roberts were persuaded to work for him, Reagan cheerfully submitted to a makeover.

These calibrated moves will surprise those who remember only the Reagan of his last presidential years, when he seemed lost in a senile fog. But the man elected president in 1980 at the age of sixty-nine was already past his prime. His peak years were the '60s and the '70s, when ideological conservatism itself peaked. Today Reagan is often identified with the Christian right, but his most ardent fans also included the neoconservatives, who gave the movement its final sophistication in the mid-'70s. With his pro-New Deal past, his history as a union leader, and his road-to-Damascus anti-statism, he was a Hollywood edition of the ex-socialists who attacked government spending in the pages of *The Public Interest* and *Commentary*. The behavioral psychologists Kenneth Holden and Stanley Plog, who tutored Reagan in state issues for the 1966 election, noted that his library was "stacked with books on political philosophy."

The cliché of Reagan the scripted automaton was never convincing. All contemporary politicians rely on scripts. What matters is how thoroughly they absorb the texts that they are given, how genuinely they make the words their own. In the foreword to *Reagan: In His Own Hand*, a new anthology of unpublished writings by Reagan, George Schultz relates that he once showed Reagan the text of a foreign policy speech that Schultz, then the secretary of state, was going to deliver. Reagan took the manuscript, "flipped it open at random, took out a pen and quickly began to edit the page. He made four or five edits and put a caret in the margin and wrote 'story.' ... I saw that he had changed the tone of my speech completely."

Unlike Goldwater, whose every spontaneous remark skirted disaster, Reagan was almost mistake-free from the very beginning, a master of the ad lib. Despite his inexperience, he insisted on speaking freely during the campaign for governor, answering any and all questions. How else to assure the voters he was not simply an actor hitting his mark? "Q and As" became his specialty. This was natural enough for someone who, in his radio days, had improvised detailed scenarios to fill out the box scores that came in over the telegraph wire. The mind on display in *Reagan: In His Own Hand* is by no means an exceptional one; but Reagan seems to have had a native literacy and a rudimentary eloquence. Many of the selections in the book are radio scripts that he wrote and delivered in the 1970s at the rate of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five per week. He was especially adept at the openings, always a sentence or two followed by a commercial break. The directness of these remarks is arresting:

> Someone sent me a Christmas item I thought you might like to hear. It is the nativity according to Marx & Lenin.
>
> What would you say if someone decided Shakespeare[']s plays, or Charles Dickens['s] novels or the music of Beethoven could be rewritten & improved?
>
> Will Alaska wind up as our biggest state or will it be our smallest state surrounded by our biggest [National] Park?

Reagan's vast political skills were not the only reason for his victory in 1966. He was swept into office in the aftermath of two upheavals, the Berkeley Free Speech Movement of 1964 and the Los Angeles riots of 1965. Both occurred on Pat Brown's watch. Close to Johnson, Brown was a Great Society liberal, the author of programs that had helped the young, the poor, and minorities. Yet it was precisely they who turned against him. When Mario Savio exhorted his fellow Berkeley students to "put our bodies against the gears, against the wheels ... and make the machine stop until we're free," the machine he meant was the sprawling "multiversity" administered by Berkeley's liberal president Clark Kerr. The blacks in Watts, from whom Brown expected gratitude, instead held him accountable for high unemployment.

Meanwhile critics on the right, including the pugnacious Sam Yorty, the mayor of Los Angeles and Brown's opponent in the Democratic primary, blamed the disruption on Communist agitators—and on Brown for indulging them. It was the same argument that the right had been making against "appeasers" for twenty years, only this time the enemies were not fictive traitors tucked away in the State Department but a visible army of vandals and looters, smashing shop windows and over-running college campuses.

Unlike Goldwater, who quixotically hoped that blacks might respond to his vision of "liberty" even as he opposed civil rights legislation, Reagan wrote off "our negro friends," as he called them. At a gathering of blacks in Santa Monica he was pressed to explain his opposition to the civil rights bill in 1964. Reagan indignantly declared he was not a bigot and stormed out. The prize, in any case, was the ever-enlarging backlash vote. Capturing that block, Reagan defeated Brown by more than a million votes and took fifty-five of fifty-eight counties. "The Reagan revolution has come to be associated with the free market," Dallek concludes. "Yet at its origins, and perhaps still today, it is equally about social order."

This is the dimension of modern-day Republican politics that its heralds seldom confront, but it is not lost on these young authors, all liberals in their thirties. To the citizens of Orange County—a Reagan stronghold in 1980 and 1984—"the 'people' were defined, somewhat amorphously, as middle-class, white, and Christian," writes Lisa McGirr. And so they are today, too, in the Goldwater Party. In peaceful and prosperous 2000, with blacks enjoying record employment and the best standard of living in history, George W. Bush fared no better with them than Goldwater did at the high tide of the civil rights battles. The post-Goldwater electorate remains divided along sharply delineated cultural lines, with no relief in sight. Walter Lippmann noted the emergence of "Goldwater Democrats" in 1964. Many would vote for George Wallace in 1968 and for Nixon in 1972. In the 1980s, the talk was of Reagan Democrats. Today we hear about "angry white males."

This trend provides the context for the stories told by Perlstein, McGirr, and Dallek. So does the suspicion—implicit in their books—that the consensus liberalism of the 1950s and the early 1960s was not only deaf to the growing thunder of social discord but also responsible for it. They may be right—or partly right. The trouble with cold war politics was not anti-communism, as Perlstein and McGirr seem to think. Contesting the Soviet Union was necessary and honorable. The trouble was that this struggle created a falsely romantic picture of political power, and our leaders, those "imperial presidents," were seduced by it. They never acknowledged the hidden costs of government—intrusiveness, dependency, the bitter contest for spoils, the festering resentments—even as those costs were mounting daily.

The high rhetoric of Kennedy's inaugural ("ask what you can do for your country"), which rang so gloriously forty years ago, sounds cultish today, and disquieting in its reverence toward the state. In an essay on Goldwater written in 1961, Buckley remarked that "he is a hero not merely to the members and followers of the National Association of Manufacturers, but to all the Right-minded youth of the nation, for whom he seems to embody the Politician Unchained from the dreary, federalized, temporizing, circumlocutory bureaucratized politics of the Welfare State, the way station on the road to 1984." This made him, said Buckley, a "radical conservative . . . who, if he were President, would change the face of the nation." In the end Barry Goldwater got just what he wanted. He was not elected president, and he changed the face of the nation. ■

Prince of the City

By ANDREW BUTTERFIELD

Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance: The Patron's Oeuvre by Dale Kent

(Yale University Press, 538 pp., $49.95)

FOR MUCH OF the fifteenth century, Cosimo de' Medici and his family were the most important patrons of art in Italy. Cosimo played Maecenas to the likes of Brunelleschi, Donatello, and Fra Angelico, harnessing their talents to his personal program of cultural and political ascendancy. Spending unprecedented sums, he erected the first Renaissance palace and the first Renaissance church, and he commissioned many influential paintings and sculptures in the new style. His patronage was of revolutionary importance: the specific course of early Renaissance art was shaped almost as much by Cosimo, by his needs and his taste, as by the artists in his employ. Suetonius wrote of Augustus Caesar that "he found a city of brick, and left a city of marble," and a similar claim could be made for Cosimo, so complete was the

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transformation that he wrought in the art and the urban fabric of Florence.

Dale Kent is the first person to attempt a synthetic account of Cosimo's patronage. It is a large and difficult subject with an immense bibliography, and Kent has assembled a great deal of material, some of it new. Unfortunately the book's usefulness is diminished by its convoluted structure, in which description, analysis, and polemic are desperately entangled. The basic facts of Cosimo's life, and of the historical background of his patronage, are scattered throughout the book in so disorderly a fashion that at times only another expert could understand what Kent is talking about. Moreover, she is overly preoccupied with scholarly battles, and with the defense of Cosimo against what she sees to be unfair modern criticisms. This is an important book, but a missed opportunity.

TO UNDERSTAND Cosimo's patronage, it is necessary first to look at his career as a businessman and a politician. He was born in 1389, the son of Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici, a successful and ambitious banker. In 1411, under Giovanni's leadership, the Medici secured a contract as transfer agent for the largest and the richest corporation in Europe: the Catholic Church. In this capacity, the Medici's international banking empire rapidly expanded; and at its greatest extent, nearly all the monies of the Church in Latin Christendom—all the tithes, the rents, the indulgences, the donations, the bequests—passed through their hands. The Medici were the bankers of the Crusades and the treasurers of the Jubilee. According to one modern estimate, they collected approximately three percent of these revenues in fees; and they also made huge profits on their loans to popes and cardinals. So great was their sway that for a time the Medici even had the papal miter their possession as collateral for a loan.

Initially their contract was only with Pope John XXIII, but by his acumen and his diplomacy Cosimo managed to renew the contract with every pope that reigned in his lifetime. This relationship was the key to the Medici's extraordinary wealth and power. With the Roman branch of the bank practically minting money, Cosimo was able to invest in trade and manufacturing all over Europe; the Medici's business ventures extended as far as London, Moscow, and Egypt. Cosimo used his connections with the Church to form friendships and alliances with generals, statesmen, and rulers throughout Italy and the Continent. These were to prove invaluable in times of crisis.

The new wealth of the Medici brought them into conflict with the old oligarchy in Florence. In the 1420s, the city was increasingly divided into two factions, one led by the Medici and the other by Rinaldo degli Albizzi. Partisan strife was greatly exacerbated by the institution in 1427 of the *catasto*, the first progressive tax on wealth in history, and also by the war with Lucca from 1429 to 1433. On the whole, the war advanced Cosimo's reputation and harmed Rinaldo's, and at its conclusion Rinaldo decided that he had to act decisively. Upon the election of a sympathetic Signoria in September 1433, Rinaldo had Cosimo arrested for treason and thrown in jail. A more resolute man might have ordered Cosimo's murder, but Rinaldo hesitated. In the delay the Medici's foreign allies intervened, applying pressure for clemency and mercy; Venice even sent a special embassy on Cosimo's behalf.

Exile was a standard punishment in Florence, and the Albizzi chose to have Cosimo and other leaders of his party banished for a period of ten years. In early October, Cosimo was expelled, and he left for Padua. But only a year later the wheel of fate turned again. In September 1434, a pro-Medici Signoria was elected, and they immediately recalled Cosimo. Albizzi's support crumbled, and Pope Eugenius IV, an ally of Cosimo who then resided in Florence, helped to convince Rinaldo to concede. A year to the day after his exile, Cosimo returned in triumph.

He immediately instituted a massive program of banishment, casting out Rinaldo degli Albizzi, Palla Strozzi (the richest man in Florence), and many others. Rinaldo had been highly selective in his choices for exile, but Cosimo was systematic in the extirpation of his enemies; he decimated the opposition. He also initiated a series of electoral "reforms" that enabled him to maintain control of the elections to the Signoria and other government offices in Florence. According to the Florentine constitution, election was basically a two-stage process: the *squittino*, or scrutiny, which determined eligibility, and the *tratta*, or sortition, a kind of lottery whereby the offices were divided among the qualified. In theory, the process would guarantee the even and unpredictable distribution of power, thereby preventing dominance by any one faction. It was open to frequent abuse, of course; yet it did work. It was mere luck that had led to the sortition of a pro-Medici Signoria in 1434.

But Cosimo was taking no such chances. In his new system, the officials called *accopiatori* screened the electoral rolls, eliminating any potential threat; and they dispensed with the sortition, and instead chose the Signoria by hand. In this way it was guaranteed that only Medici partisans could hold office. Except for a few very brief periods, this system remained in effect for the rest of Cosimo's life, assuring him unmatched supremacy in Florence. The city remained a republic, and legally Cosimo was just another private citizen; but he dominated all aspects of its public life, and he was the final arbiter of virtually every piece of government policy. During the Renaissance, the Italian word *stato* could be used to mean either "state" or "faction." In Florence under Cosimo, the two distinct senses of the word effectively merged: the Medici party and the government of Florence became almost indistinguishable.

Ever since the fifteenth century, the proper interpretation of Cosimo de' Medici and his actions has been intensely debated. Was he a *padrino* or the *padre della patria*, a godfather or the father of the country? His defenders aver that he was basically a businessman whose political machinations were defensive, forced on him by the Albizzi faction. They stress his restraint and his respect for the formal structure of Florence's republican constitution: Cosimo never attempted to become a prince or a tyrant, and through his party he shared wealth and honor with a great many families. His critics counter that he held all real power in his hands, in this way undermining the republic: they cite texts that refer to him as a king in all but name, they note that he acted as the head of state for visiting dignitaries, and they point out that the Medici augmented their prestige beyond that of other citizens in countless symbolic ways.

The critical view of Cosimo has been popular with liberal and leftist historians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; but Cosimo's defenders have included Curt Gutkind, his only biographer in modern times, and Nicolai Rubinstein, arguably the greatest living historian of Renaissance Florence. No doubt the great disputation will continue. Yet it is unlikely anyone will ever surpass the analysis of Machiavelli, who in the *Discourses* refers to Cosimo as the *"principe della repubblica,"* the prince of the republic. This supremely Machiavellian paradox perfectly captures the complexity of Cosimo's status as unofficial ruler.

AS A PATRON of the arts, certainly, Cosimo's record of achievement is unambiguous. For nearly fifty years, he was at the very forefront of artistic and cultural change, sponsoring the leading artists in Italy. The shift from Gothic to Renaissance first took place in Florence, and it was largely wrought by the artists in Cosimo's circle. Indeed, Cosimo was a significant patron even before his rise to power. In 1419, as a mem-

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ber of the bankers' guild, he helped to hire Lorenzo Ghiberti to make the statue *Saint Matthew* for a niche at Orsanmichele. This was only the second monumental figure sculpture in bronze since antiquity. The first had been Ghiberti's *Saint John the Baptist*, made a few years before; and whereas the style of Ghiberti's figure was still unmistakably Gothic, his figure of Saint Matthew was far more classical in its architecture, its drapery, its physiognomy, and its epigraphy. And Cosimo's vision is equally manifest in what is believed to be his second significant commission, the tomb of Pope John XXIII by Donatello and Michelozzo in the Baptistery of Florence. This was the first funerary monument in the Renaissance style in Europe; and it, too, is extraordinary for its grand scale, and for its inclusion of an effigy in gilt bronze.

Cosimo's position as a patron during the 1420s was very different from what he would achieve later on. Before 1434, he commissioned works as a member of various corporate bodies, such as the bankers' guild. He may have played a leading role on these occasions, but he did not act unilaterally, and he alone did not receive the prestige and enjoy the glory. He was only one among many considerable patrons of the new style in the visual arts. Thus it was the Brancacci, not the Medici, who retained Masaccio to decorate their family chapel with a fresco cycle of revolutionary significance; and Rinaldo degli Albizzi, Palla Strozzi, Niccolò da Uzzano, and the Barbadori family similarly commissioned major works from Ghiberti, Donatello, Brunelleschi, and Fra Filippo Lippi. All these men were important members of the oligarchy, and the support of the new style was as much their doing as the Medici's.

If there had been no factional strife, or if the Albizzi party had come out on top, it is likely that the patronage of art in Florence would have remained as it had been before, more or less evenly distributed among the top families of the city. With the victory of the Medici, however, and with the exile of so many political and cultural leaders of the oligarchy, there was no one left to compete with Cosimo. This was especially the case owing to the structure of the Medici faction. The old oligarchy had been a coalition of families who were roughly equal in wealth and power; but the Medici party was highly centralized. Few of its constituents could rival Cosimo in any way, and many of its members were *gente nuova*, thoroughly dependent on the Medici for their rise in fortune and status.

The construction of the great church of San Lorenzo illustrates the change in power and patronage. Designed by Brunelleschi, it is the first Renaissance church, and "a paradigm of harmony and rationalism" (in the words of the art historian Isabelle Hyman). The plan to build the new church began around 1419, and the early funding for the project came from many families in the parish. The Medici certainly played a significant financial role from the beginning, but so did other families, including some of their opponents. Indeed, there is no evidence that any one family dominated the planning at the start.

But the list of the banished in 1434 included all the families of the old oligarchy who had patronal rights at San Lorenzo, and without their support the funding for the new church lapsed. In 1442, after several years of financial straits, Cosimo stepped in and agreed to save Brunelleschi's project with a grant of 40,000 florins, a gift of unparalleled size. In exchange, Cosimo extracted a promise from the canons of San Lorenzo that the area in front of the high altar would be reserved for his burial, and that no other family could have the right to place its tomb or its coat of arms in the transept or the choir.

With this step, Cosimo effectively made the whole church a Medici commission. To be sure, other families still patronized the individual chapels, but these were essentially reserved for Medici partisans. No family in Florence before the Medici had ever assumed such a dominant presence in a church, certainly not one of the scale and importance of San Lorenzo. The Medici even had the liturgy of the church revised to their benefit.

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Bennozzo Gozzoli, portrait of Cosimo de' Medici (detail), Medici Palace, Florence

The burial church of the Medici, San Lorenzo was the site of many works ordered by Cosimo and his family. Cosimo's father, Giovanni di Bicci, had commissioned the so-called Old Sacristy of the church, erected in the 1420s according to Brunelleschi's designs. The decoration of the Old Sacristy was overseen by Cosimo and his brother Lorenzo, and it includes large pictorial reliefs by Donatello and two sets of bronze doors by Donatello and Michelozzo. Around 1460, the Medici hired Desiderio da Settignano to erect a large marble altarpiece in their transept chapel. Cosimo commissioned Donatello to create terra-cotta statues for the niches at either end of the transept, and to make two bronze pulpits for the crossing.

In the year following his death, Cosimo's tomb was placed at the site of his choosing, the center of the crossing directly below the dome. Although it is a floor tomb, and thus relatively modest in type, the monument included highly prestigious materials such as porphyry and bronze, and the design suggests a celestial map. This alludes to the metaphorical relation between "Cosmos" and "Cosimo," a symbolic pun that was common among Medici courtiers. Perhaps most importantly, at the Signoria's request the tomb bore an inscription proclaiming Cosimo

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to be *Pater Patriae*, Father of the Country.

As the result of many such projects, the appearance of the interior of San Lorenzo was preponderantly due to one family alone, the Medici. This contrasts significantly with the situation at all other major churches in Florence, such as Santa Maria Novella and Santa Croce, which are filled with a miscellany of paintings and sculptures commissioned by dozens of families, who were all in direct competition with one another for attention and honor. At San Lorenzo, the battle was already over.

SHORTLY BEFORE HE took over the patronage of San Lorenzo, Cosimo had begun to sponsor the transformation of San Marco into a Dominican convent. The architecture was entrusted to Michelozzo, while the frescoes in the convent and the altarpiece of the church were the work of Fra Angelico. Unmatched in their cool radiance and their lyrical delicacy, the frescoes rank among the greatest masterpieces of quattrocento painting. And although the altarpiece has been scarred and bleached by severe over-cleaning in the nineteenth century, it is widely recognized as one of the most important and influential altarpieces of the early Renaissance. John Pope-Hennessy called it "a truly revolutionary work," and praised it especially for its spatial content, rendered in single-point perspective.

The San Marco altarpiece also marks a new step in the glorification of the Medici family. As Kent notes:

> In direct response to Medici patronage or charity, the convent of San Marco was re-dedicated in 1443 to the Medici family saints Cosmas and Damian as well as its original patron, Saint Mark. The San Marco altarpiece and cell frescoes were apparently among the earliest conceived of a number of images made between the late 1430s and the early 1450s which foregrounded the Medici saints in a manner unprecedented in commissions incorporating patron saints for other Florentine laymen. In relation to the Holy Family, the Medici saints in these images were larger in scale than before, more central to the composition, and played a more important and more active role in the drama of intercession.... By the time Cosimo became a patron of art, he was the acknowledged leader of the Medici lineage, and his saintly patrons were recognized as its general symbols.

Another of Cosimo's major building projects was the Palazzo Medici. Construction began in 1446, according to plans by Michelozzo. In its time it was the largest private palace that had ever been built in Florence. The Palazzo Pitti and the Palazzo Strozzi, both erected somewhat later in the quattrocento, are the only Florentine palaces to rival it or to surpass it in scale. And from its inception the grandeur of the Palazzo Medici was the subject of comment and controversy. Pope Pius II called it a "palace fit for a king," and others compared it to the Colosseum in Rome.

ON THE BASIS of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and Cicero's *De Officiis*, humanists in the fifteenth century had begun to champion magnificence as a social virtue—a noteworthy change from the medieval emphasis on charity and humility. Accordingly, writers in Cosimo's circle celebrated the social benefit of the palazzo: it added to the beauty and prestige of the city. But clearly not everyone was convinced. Kent cites a remarkable passage from the *History of Florence* by Giovanni Cavalcanti, Cosimo's relative:

> The multitude of citizens, no less than the plebeian horde, directed their wrath, full of bitterness and inclined to evil-doing, against the more distinguished citizens ... and united in accursed envy of the infinite riches of Cosimo: for which iniquitous reasons many complained of his magnificent buildings; and many said: In his hypocrisy, full of pride in the church, our purses are emptied to pay for them in the name of taxes.... And now that there is nothing more to build for the friars, he has begun on a palace, by comparison with which the Roman Colosseum will appear to disadvantage. And others said: Who would not build magnificently, being able to spend money which is not his? And thus throughout the city there was much odious gossip, and everything was turned angrily against Cosimo.... And along with these reproaches they added that the coffers of the taxes collected at the gates were being emptied to build Cosimo's house; but they said nothing when this man sustained the Commune with many much greater sums: and by such odd reasoning Cosimo was defamed. Whence under cover of night, his threshold was all covered with blood: about this grievous significance of this there was the greatest murmuring throughout the city.

In discussing this passage, Kent claims bizarrely that "clearly to very many citizens, great and beautiful palaces, like magnificent churches, were ultimately acceptable because they served the common good and the good of the commune.... As a factor in Cosimo's relations with his fellow-citizens ... the new Medici palace was on balance more positive than negative." To sustain this point, she cites the artist and theorist Antonio Averlino Filarete, who "described the finished Medici palace as honoring the neighborhood it dominated, and indeed the whole city." Unfortunately, Kent neglects to inform the reader that Filarete made this statement in his *Treatise on Architecture*, a text that he dedicated to Piero de' Medici, Cosimo's son. Filarete was a Medici partisan, not an impartial observer. This is a characteristic mistake by Kent, who often cites flattering and propagandistic texts written in the Medici's honor or defense as disinterested historical documents.

THE INTERIOR OF the Palazzo Medici was of exceptional magnificence. It dazzled all who beheld it. A Milanese diplomat in 1459 wrote that the palace was "embellished on every side with gold and fine marbles, with carvings and sculptures in relief, with pictures and inlays done in perspective, by the most accomplished and perfect masters." An inventory from 1492 confirms the accuracy of this description, recording room after room filled with paintings, sculptures, tapestries, and works of art by the greatest artists. Although the document dates from after Cosimo's death, it is believed that his possessions at the palace included six paintings by Fra Angelico, four by Fra Filippo Lippi, and three by Antonio Pollaiuolo, as well as other works by Domenico Veneziano, Petrus Christus, Rogier van der Weyden, and at least a half-dozen sculptures by Donatello.

Perhaps the most remarkable room in the palace was its chapel, which appears to have been constructed between 1450 and 1454. The fresco cycle by Benozzo Gozzoli that wraps the walls of the room depicts Cosimo and his family and friends as members of the entourage of the Magi on their way to pay obeisance to the infant Christ. The ceiling and the architectural elements of the chapel are elaborately carved and gilded, and the floor is paved with red and green porphyry in imitation of the inlaid floors of the early Christian basilicas in Rome. It was one of the earliest chapels in a private palace in Florence, and it was by far the most sumptuous ever made.

Another extraordinary feature of the palace was the presence of Donatello's bronze statue of David at the center of its courtyard. This was the first large-scale nude sculpture since antiquity, and in its subtle suggestion of its subject's interior life it set a new standard for Renaissance artists. It was also the first large bronze statue in the Renaissance commissioned by a private person, rather than by a governmental or corporate body. The sculp-

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ture's iconography is the subject of intense debate among art historians; but it certainly cannot be understood without reference to the universal understanding of David as an exemplum for "kings, princes, and all magistrates."

David and his people enjoyed special protection by God, owing to David's rectitude and humility. In the psalm *Benedictus Dominus* (Psalm 144), which David was thought to have written in thanksgiving for his victory over Goliath, David sings that "it is you who gives health to kings." The psalm concludes with images of the abundance, peace, and concord that David's people enjoy under his rule, blessed by God. This aspect of Davidic symbolism had been a common feature in monarchial art and ceremony since the emperor Theodosius in the fourth century. It entered Florentine civic art in 1416, when the Signoria purchased Donatello's marble *David*.

We have no direct evidence of what Cosimo thought about David or about Donatello's statue; but we have clear evidence of the views of his heirs. In 1474, ten years after Cosimo's death, Bartolomeo Scala wrote a dialogue called *On the Ideal Citizen*, which he dedicated to Lorenzo il Magnifico, Cosimo's grandson. Its main interlocutors are Cosimo and Lorenzo themselves. The grandfather discusses with his grandson the political significance of David, and explains the necessity of maintaining a good relationship with God, so that he will protect both the ruler and his state. "We owe much to our Lord," Cosimo says. "We should consider his acts of kindness to our country, which he has defended many times.... No less should we meditate upon how much our family owes to the Lord, who has preserved it with its dignity intact, when it was endangered by seditions and military strife."

Cosimo erected and embellished other buildings as well, most importantly the Badia a Fiesole, San Francesco al Bosco, the Novitiate chapel at Santa Croce, and the greater part of the Medici villas at Careggi and Cafaggiuolo. In his *Ricordi*, Lorenzo il Magnifico states that between 1434 and 1471 his family spent 663,755 gold florins for alms, taxes, and public buildings, most of the expenses borne by Cosimo personally. According to Vespasiano da Bisticci, Cosimo's friend and biographer, "there was not a year when he did not expend on building from fifteen to eighteen thousand florins." If this were true throughout the thirty-year period between Cosimo's ascendancy in 1434 and his death in 1464, this would come to a total of around 450,000 florins or more—an astonishing sum, and one close to the amount that might be inferred from Lorenzo's memoirs. We do not know how much Cosimo spent on paintings and statuary, but Gutkind records some miscellaneous figures for Cosimo's expenditures on decorative arts: 12,200 florins on precious stones; 2,000 florins on rings; 2,600 florins on medallions; 4,600 florins on vases; 3,600 florins on reliquaries; and 6,700 florins on silver. Magnificent sums for magnificent objects.

THE FACTS OF Cosimo's patronage are unequivocal. What is not clear are its meanings. What did Cosimo hope to accomplish through his unprecedented support of the arts? In his ecclesiastical patronage, certainly, one motive was the desire for expiation and propitiation. In his biography of the Medici banker, Vespasiano reports:

> Now Cosimo, having applied himself to the temporal affairs of the state, the conduct of which was bound to leave him with certain matters on his conscience—as is the case with all those who are fain to govern states and take the leading place—awoke to a sense of his condition, and was anxious that God might pardon him, and secure to him the possession of his earthly goods. Wherefore he felt he must needs turn to pious ways, otherwise his riches would be lost to him. He had prickings of conscience that certain portions of his wealth—where it came from I cannot say—had not been righteously gained, and to remove this weight from his shoulders he held conference with Pope Eugenius, who was then in Florence, as to the load which lay on his conscience. Pope Eugenius had settled the Observantist Order in San Marco; but, as their lodging there was inadequate, he remarked to Cosimo that, if he was bent on unburdening his soul, he might build a monastery. After he had spent ten thousand without providing all that was wanted, he afterwards completed the monastery, spending more than forty thousand florins over the work.

Expiation was a common motive for patrons in the Renaissance, especially bankers, since they were thought to be guilty of usury, a grave sin. In seeking atonement through charity, Cosimo was typical of merchants in Florence and elsewhere; he differed only in the scale of his benefaction. Moreover, there is abundant evidence that Cosimo was a pious and contemplative man. He read Augustine, Gregory the Great, and other fathers of the Church, and discussed them with leading clerics and humanists in Florence, and sponsored translations of Plato. He even had a private cell at San Marco for prayer and meditation.

In recent decades, art historians have concentrated largely on the political dimensions of Cosimo's patronage. Specifically, they have sought to explain how the works he ordered helped to increase his prestige as the unofficial ruler of the city. In magnitude, his patronage was incomparably greater than that of any Florentine before; and the forms, the iconographies, and the materials of some of his commissions can perhaps be best explained in relation to princely and sacral-imperial traditions, rather than republican or civic ones.

It has been noted, for example, that the Medici were the only Florentines ever to erect monuments incorporating porphyry. The hardest (and rarest) of stones used for architecture and sculpture, porphyry in antiquity had been legally reserved for the exclusive use of the emperor, and this privilege was retained by the papacy in the medieval centuries. The material held strong associations with the universal authority of the pope and the emperor. (The Holy Roman Emperors were crowned on a porphyry roundel in the floor of St. Peter's.) As the pope's bankers, the Medici were able to obtain a supply of the stone, which they used only for their most important monuments: the palace chapel and the tombs of Giovanni di Bicci and Cosimo. When the Pazzi, another Florentine banking family, tried to buy porphyry in Rome, they were arrested for poaching.

Similarly, the Medici were the sole Florentine family to commission large sculptures in bronze; owing to its expense and its prestige, this material was otherwise used only for works made for the state or the major guilds. Moreover, some of the bronzes that the Medici ordered, such as Donatello's *David* and *Judith and Holofernes* and Verrocchio's *David*, explicitly addressed the issue of good government and the role of the Medici as protectors of the republic. No Florentine patron had previously dared to commission anything of the kind. The Medici were the only private family to sponsor what were in effect public monuments; and they erected these public monuments in the private sphere of their palace, further blurring the distinctions. (It is no wonder that at the fall of the Medici in 1494 the republic immediately removed these sculptures from the palace.)

A MAJOR GOAL of Kent's book is to refute the political interpretation of Cosimo's patronage, which she calls the "princely thesis." Yet she never gives a clear account of what she means by "princely." At its most figurative, the term denotes magnificence, sumptuousness, and munificence, with special reference to

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architectural patronage. By this definition, Cosimo's oeuvre was indisputably princely. Even Kent concedes that his commissions were "comparable in scale and extravagance" to those of "his princely friends," and that the Palazzo Medici "accommodates an interpretation ... in terms of statements of princely luxury and power."

But Kent more often wants "princely" to have connotations of royal or despotic government, and this is the point that she attacks over and over again. She claims that seignorial and sacral-imperial models of patronage were largely irrelevant and meaningless in Florence, a city of strong civic and republican traditions. She is especially zealous in her assertion that since Cosimo never became a prince, the works that he commissioned can be princely only in the superficial sense of their grandeur and not in any more meaningful way. Exaggerating her opponents' views to the point of caricature, she writes that the "flaunting of a superiority of means and of taste can in no sense be equated with a challenge to the constitutional authority of the government of the Florentine state."

But no one has said that it did. What scholars have said is that Cosimo's patronage, in its form and its content, augmented his aura of authority. According to Kent, "in terms of his choices of artists, subjects and forms, Cosimo's patronage oeuvre was closely related to the bodies of work commissioned by other citizens with whom he shared a common culture." This is simply not true. The works that he commissioned were often unique or exceptional, and they cannot be explained solely within the norms of Florentine civic traditions. It was not a matter of money alone to make use of porphyry, or to take over a major church, or to put up a statue of David in the center of your courtyard.

Cosimo's position as ruler was unofficial, supra-constitutional. It depended on his personal authority rather than on his legal or statutory authority. His patronage of art and architecture should be seen in this light. The magnificence of his buildings, and sometimes even the iconography of his paintings and his sculptures, demonstrated by association that he was uniquely blessed by God, nature, and fate: Cosimo was the richest and the wisest, the most pious and the most powerful.

Cosimo de' Medici, in sum, is a fine example of what Max Weber meant by charismatic authority. Weber defined charisma as "a certain quality of an individual person by which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with ... exceptional powers." And he claimed that "the charismatic hero does not deduce his authority from codes and statutes, as is the case with the jurisdiction of office, nor does he deduce his authority from traditional custom or feudal vows of faith.... The charismatic leader gains and maintains authority solely by his strength in life. If he wants to be a prophet, he must perform miracles, if he wants to be a war lord, he must perform heroic deeds. Above all, however, his divine mission must 'prove' itself in that those who faithfully surrender to him must fare well. If they do not fare well, he is obviously not the master sent by the gods." This nicely describes Cosimo, a ruler who rarely held highest office.

Following Cosimo's death, the Medici remained on top for another thirty years. Without his guidance, however, the system of control that he created fell apart. Neither his son Piero nor his grandson Lorenzo had his instincts as a deal maker and a power broker. Whereas Cosimo had made sure that all his friends got richer, his heirs stupidly called in their loans, alienating their allies. The Medici for a time lost the banking contract with the papacy, and even fought a war with the pope. At home, their hegemony became increasingly undemocratic and unpopular: major rebellions occurred in 1466 and 1478, and Cosimo's grandson Giuliano de' Medici was murdered.

Lorenzo il Magnifico was a better patron of art than of men. He ascended to the position of ruler as if by birthright, and lived and reigned like a prince. Whereas Cosimo had mixed expressions of power with acts of deference, Lorenzo was openly autocratic; and the art that he commissioned tended to be more poetical, Platonic, and courtly. Within the Medici circle, culture became ever more refined. But the circle got smaller. Upon Lorenzo's death in 1492, his son succeeded him, but two years later the Medici were expelled. Immediately the people went about the city, smashing symbols of Medici glory; the words *Pater Patriae* were expunged from Cosimo's tomb. As a consequence of their ties to the Church, in the sixteenth century the Medici would return to rule once more; but for a generation they were gone.

In his biography of Cosimo, Vespasiano records: "I once heard Cosimo say that the great mistake of his life was that he did not begin to spend his wealth ten years earlier; because, knowing well the disposition of his fellow-citizens, he was sure that, in the lapse of fifty years, no memory would remain of his personality or of his clan save the few buildings he might have erected." It would appear that Cosimo was a realist also about oblivion. Yet he cheated oblivion with his patronage, and the magnificence of his achievement haunts us still. ■

Nature or Justice

By RICHARD WHITE

A River Running West: The Life of John Wesley Powell by Donald Worster

(Oxford University Press, 673 pp., $35)

Zuni and the American Imagination by Eliza McFeely

(Hill and Wang, 204 pp., $24)

I.

THE LATE NINETEENTH century was not an age distinguished for its politics. Like the late twentieth century, it was as deficient in political leadership as it was in political imagination. Such interesting ideas as it had came from the periphery, where third parties, reformers, and cranks congregated. Its political accomplishments were not those of Congress, the courts, or the presidency, but those of government bureaus. It was, paradoxical as the phrase may sound, an age of heroic bureaucrats.

John Wesley Powell was the most heroic of the bureaucrats. He was also a reformer, and, on occasion, a crank. For

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years he headed simultaneously the United States Geological Survey and the Bureau of American Ethnology—the cornerstones of government science; and, for two brief moments, he provided the intellectual leadership for the doomed efforts to reform American land policy in the West. In his biography of Powell, *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian: John Wesley Powell and the Second Opening of the West*, which appeared in 1954, Wallace Stegner cast Powell as an American visionary who "fought the dragons of error, backwardness and unchecked exploitation." This environmental St. George was rejected in his own time, but he was canonized in our time.

Stegner was a skilled writer, but he was not much of a historian. His Powell emerged fully formed on the Western stage; and Stegner paid relatively little attention to Powell's later career in Washington. Moreover, Stegner's West was inhabited by heroes and villains, and he gives us their conflicts and their congruences as straightforward and clear-cut. Donald Worster presents a much more tangled Powell and a much more nuanced West. Stegner's Powell was the victim of ignorance and greed; Worster's Powell was complicit in his own fate.

The arid West is the country nearest to Donald Worster's heart. In his writings on the American West, notably *Dust Bowl* (1979) and *Rivers of Empire* (1985), he has tried to bring together the themes of social justice and concern for nature. In the actual world of Western politics, of course, a concern for social justice and a concern for nature are species that do not usually frequent the same watersheds, so it is not surprising that John Wesley Powell, or at least the one that Wallace Stegner created, appeals to Worster. And if Stegner's Powell were able to stand much historical scrutiny, Worster would have written a passionate but predictable book. But John Wesley Powell ultimately disappoints Worster. *A River Running West* is a product of the tensions between the Powell that Worster would have preferred and the different man that Worster's research has uncovered. The result is a far richer book than Stegner's environmental classic.

Not much is known about Powell's early years, but his middle name and his character carried the mark of his upbringing in a peripatetic immigrant family of devout English Methodists. He was born in Mount Morris, New York, in 1834, in a Methodist parsonage where his parents, Joseph and Mary, had taken temporary shelter. Joseph Powell was an occasional tailor and an unenthusiastic farmer, but his greatest talent—or at least his most lucrative talent—was for land speculation. Powell's Methodism did not last, but lapsed believers do not get away easily. The secular Powell retained the tensions of his religious training: "a swaying between subservience and rebellion, conformity and withdrawal, spirituality and worldliness," as Worster puts it. These were the poles that would mark his life and his career.

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The Paiute Taugu and John Wesley Powell in 1873

Powell became enamored of natural science at the knee of George Crookham, one of those vernacular intellectuals who were a commonplace of small-town life in the nineteenth century. "Big George" was a three-hundred-fifty-pound autodidact who taught school, created his own museum of natural curiosities, and operated a way station on the Underground Railroad. In the years before the Civil War, Powell tried to make a life for himself in science as a naturalist: he wanted to be more than a slimmed-down version of Big George. But his search for education was frustrating and spasmodic. He attended Illinois College, dropped out due to a lack of funds, and then briefly returned before moving on to the Illinois Institute (now Wheaton College). When he grew discontented there, he enrolled at Oberlin College, but then dropped out and returned briefly to the Illinois Institute. The patchwork of courses that he assembled at these schools constituted his only higher education. It would have been easy to predict that Powell would remain as he was in his late twenties: a small-town Illinois schoolteacher with a passion for natural history.

The Civil War changed everything. An ardent abolitionist, Powell quickly enlisted in the Union army, but it was more than abolitionism that drove him to join. For Powell, the destiny of the Union was the destiny of democratic governance, and the promise was "a more powerful moral cause than any church or creed." He was ready, in the best of conscience, to be a servant of the state, because he deeply believed the state to be the servant and the protector of the people. Powell came to know all too well the limitations of the men who governed, but this knowledge did not dilute his faith in the nation.

At Shiloh, Powell lost his arm and nearly his life; his wife, who was also his cousin, nursed him back to health. He returned to duty, rose to the rank of major, and was not mustered out until close to the end of the war. The stump of his severed arm would cause him trouble for the remainder of his life. And so at the age of thirty-one Major Powell was a crippled veteran in a nation full of crippled veterans. He had done little other than, in Worster's nice phrase, "acquire a character."

In the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, Powell, now a professor, repeated the restless jumping from one small Midwestern college to another that had characterized his quest for education before the war. The late nineteenth century was a kind of golden age of intellectual life in the Midwest, but the very best of the region's writers, scientists, and intellectuals did

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not remain there for long. Most moved directly east. Powell went west for the first time in 1867, as a researcher, a teacher, and a collector for whatever Midwestern institutions would sign on for the rocks, the fossils, and the artifacts that he promised to bring back.

To distinguish Powell's nationalism from other varieties common in the West, Worster, like Stegner, cleverly casts his narrative to highlight a meeting, unimportant in itself, between Powell and the land speculator William Gilpin, who stands in for all those dreamy, ridiculous Western boosters so certain that nature had great things in store for the republic in the West. Powell shared their faith in American expansion, but he had a different "way of coming West." Powell's deserts were real, not simply fields awaiting irrigation; and unlike Gilpin he had sympathy for Indian peoples. He was not ready, as the boosters were, to smooth the Indians' path to the grave. Still, although nature and Indians would become the consuming interests of Powell's intellectual life, his nearly religious zeal for their subordination matched Gilpin's.

Powell's early Western trips culminated in his most famous adventure: in 1869, he descended the Colorado River and was able to fill in some of the remaining blank spaces on maps of the West. Worster allows that the first man to descend the Colorado through the Grand Canyon may have been James White, a rather vicious ne'er-do-well who, fleeing either Indians or his companions, got in over his head and somehow survived. But Powell, unlike White, was not a mere adventurer; he was a scientist leading an expedition of relatively disciplined amateurs—the raw Midwestern talent making its mark all over the country—on a publicly funded voyage of scientific discovery. He wanted "to possess the vast interior space of the Colorado River as his own intellectual property, to measure it off and stake it out in seven-league boots." What that meant, in more mundane terms, was not only mapping and discovery, but also building natural history collections and studying geology.

Worster gives a wonderful account of the Colorado River expedition, which should have proved once and for all that the sublime does not always elevate human beings. Powell's men were not terribly impressed by the Grand Canyon. It had "nothing to recommend it," one wrote, and it was a scene of "general desolation." They whined, they fought, they grumbled, they schemed. Some wished that they were somewhere else, anywhere else; and when three of them attempted to escape by climbing out of the Grand Canyon, it cost them their lives. The Paiutes murdered them, apparently in revenge for the murder of some Paiutes by Mormons. Nor was Powell always at his best. As Worster puts it, Major Powell "loved being Major," and the ex-soldiers on the expedition had had their fill of officers. His planning was not all it might have been, and within a few weeks of casting off the expedition had wrecked one boat and set its own camp on fire, losing a third of its supplies.

In the end, the disasters only underlined the dangers, and served, along with the rumors that circulated of the men's demise, to highlight both the noteworthiness and the newsworthiness of the expedition. Idiots and accidents can make for an adventure, and the journey did have an inherent drama, which Powell would accentuate and exaggerate in his later accounts. Powell himself performed remarkable feats, climbing with his one good arm into places where mountain goats might have hesitated to tread. In Worster's estimation, the expedition was "one of the greatest events in the history of American exploration." It became Powell's popular and intellectual capital, and unlike others who raised cultural capital through their explorations and adventures in the West, Powell invested his wisely.

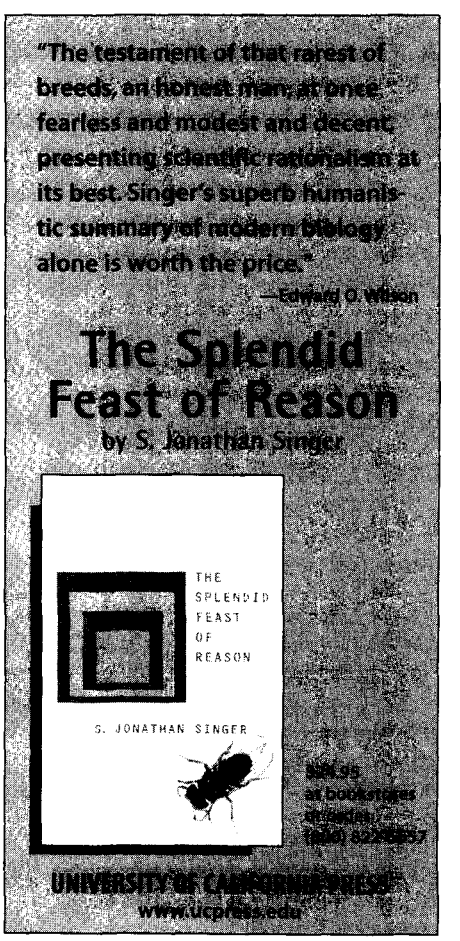
II.

In the 1870s the American West was thick with government surveys—the King Survey, the Wheeler Survey, the Hayden Survey. All were at work mapping the West and cataloguing its resources; and in many cases the national interest proved to be remarkably congruent with the interests of the railroads or the mining companies. Powell managed to create his own survey, a small outfit that distinguished itself from the others with its interest in Indians and with its concentration on the Colorado Plateau, stretching from the southern end of the Great Basin into Arizona. Powell made a second expedition down the Colorado, still without trained scientists; but he did bring Emerson's essays, and he read them to his men, perhaps in the hope of enhancing their appreciation of the sublime. With the Shivwit Indians threatening revenge for the killing of three of their people by the Mormons, he abandoned this expedition partway through the Grand Canyon.

Worster stakes out Powell's role in the story of (as Stephen Pyne has put it) how the canyon became Grand. His geologists, painters, and photographers constructed an image for the canyon, which became the centerpiece of the Powell Survey, in the way that a Hollywood agent might later find, mold, and produce a star. Powell, the photographer Jack Hillers, and the painter Thomas Moran were all cultural entrepreneurs who turned "landscape into profitable commodity." Moran was well known before he joined Powell, but Hillers's stunning photographs become all the more impressive with the knowledge that he was only just learning his craft. (Hillers replaced the expedition's original photographer, who turned out to be afraid of heights.)

Moran, Hillers, and the geologist Clarence Dutton presented to the public, in Dutton's phrase, the image of the Grand Canyon as "the sublimest thing on earth ... an agnostic's sublime." Powell's men were not looking in nature for God or for moral instruction. The canyon, and the entire natural world, was "secular, profane, rationally ordered, and utterly material." It revealed the passage of vast expanses of time, and the awesome result of natural laws of form and function. It was as if one had stumbled upon an ancient city of walls, columns, and alcoves, grown gigantic and capable of replicating themselves. To appreciate it took work, knowledge, and education, and Powell conceived of the whole survey as an "instrument of education." Through it, he would explain and interpret the West to Americans who had never encountered its equivalent.

As a scientist, Powell was quick and intuitive. He sketched out large patterns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and hypotheses, but he was impatient with the careful work needed to follow up on them. He was not known primarily for his own research; he was a synthesizer, and a wonderful organizer and recruiter of scientists. Once the domain of amateurs, his survey became the best group of scientists working in the West. And Powell let his scientists determine what work was important. In his later career, he partially detached the government bureaus from the constituencies that would seemingly swallow them. The United States Geological Survey became far more than the tool of the mining industry. Powell focused on paleontology, topography, studies of the Ice Age, and the geology of places with no hope of mineral resources. He did not abandon applied science, but neither did he allow it to dominate government science. Nor would the results be confined to an audience of the elite. The numerous, often lavish publications of his various agencies served his larger interest of making the government's work available to the people. But Powell combined pure science with an eagerness to put science to work shaping public policy. The most famous lesson of Powell's education of the American people was that their settlement would have to conform to what he regarded as the logic of the arid West.

Stegner saw Powell as a visionary, a clear-eyed scientist who recognized the limits of the land that he knew and loved. If Powell was not yet a conservationist, Stegner was confident that he would have become one. In the words of his enemy Senator Eugene Hale, Powell was unwilling to leave the West to "nature and the common incidents of human life." It is a telling remark. In both Stegner's and Worster's versions of the story, Powell ends up defeated by a coalition of buffoons, promoters, hucksters, and citizens blind to their own larger interests. Stegner has the defeated but defiant Powell pointing to a better way. Worster, for all his admiration for Powell, often depicts him spinning like a top and pointing in several directions at once. And ironically, like Hale, Worster wants Powell ultimately to leave some of the West "to nature."

Worster cannot accept Stegner's woolly optimism that eventually Powell, like modern environmentalists, would have come to oppose all instances of man's interference with the natural order of the ecosystem. Powell believed in the subordination and the rearrangement of nature for human use. He did not believe that nature should form a model for human conduct or human action; he was quite ready to remove every drop of water from every river, stream, and rivulet of the West so that the water could be used to grow crops and to support farms and ranches. His objection to Western land law was that it was utterly incapable of achieving those ends in a fair and rational manner. But science could show the proper way to do it.

Still, the threads that Worster wants to weave together—a love of nature and a struggle for social justice—do not cohere in Powell's *Report on the Lands of the Arid Region,* published in 1878, or in the battle over it. Powell originally intended to save the land for the people, not for the large corporations that were gathering its resources. He would limit the amount of land that any individual could hold, and he would provide for the cooperative development of water. Even with the draining of Western rivers, most of the West would remain arid, and so he planned to replace 160-acre homesteads with 2,560-acre pasturage homesteads. Here, too, ranchers could come together to form grazing districts that would allow them to pasture their herds on what would amount to an unfenced commons within the district. Powell got sympathetic congressmen to sponsor bills that would turn his ideas into law.

The bills went nowhere. Neither capitalists nor settlers approved of Powell's plans. Corporations, eager to change the land laws themselves, initially expressed interest, but they backed off when they grasped Powell's intention. Boosters and settlers opposed Powell tooth and nail. Relying on the idea—supported by Powell's rival Ferdinand Hayden—that rain follows the plow, they saw aridity as a temporary problem and believed that the climate was changing for the better. More than denial was at work here; the implications of Powell's plan were worrisome. Settlers in the agrarian West imagined a densely populated rural landscape that could support schools, villages, and towns. Powell's grants were too large for this to be possible, and his opponents feared that the West would be too sparsely populated to support a public life.

Having failed as an agrarian democrat, Powell returned as a plutocrat. When, acting largely on his suggestion, a National Academy of Sciences report recommended consolidating the surveys into the United States Geological Survey, he found himself temporarily out of a job, and he eagerly joined the Public Lands Commission in 1879. Created by Congress to examine the land system and Western development, the commission was made up of a group of reformers much more closely tied to a Republican Party elite of corporate capitalists than to Western farmers. These so-called reformers took Powell's plan and cut out its agrarian heart. The West, in their eyes, should depend on developers and large capital. Irrigable land would be sold with no acreage limit, and private companies would control irrigation. The limit on pasturage homesteads was eliminated. In effect, the commission recommended the end of the homesteading age and the dependence on private capital for Western development. Development would come under elite control. Powell signed on, but the commission's report went nowhere.

Stegner is sanguine about the commission's report, barely noting its differences from Powell's original plan. Worster reads more acutely. The episode reveals Powell's tragic flaw: his inability to forge nature and justice into an inseparable whole. This failure is the powerful heart of Worster's book. The great weakness of modern environmentalism has been its willingness to ignore, or at least to defer, issues of social justice. And one of the great weaknesses of modern movements that at least claim to seek social justice is their support of enterprises so destructive of natural systems that they create wastelands.

That Powell was complicit in his downfall makes him a tragic hero, but he remains heroic. As Worster sketches the arc of Powell's career, Powell reveals his own weakness in the first battle, abandoning the cause of social justice; but he redeems himself in joining the second battle with a renewed commitment to social justice in the West. Yet he has not realized that social justice depends on following and protecting nature in the arid lands; and having failed to understand this, he loses again, although he gains the ability to inspire visions of the West beyond shallow boosterism and thoughtless individualism.

III.

What makes Powell's story powerful is Worster's passionate conviction that social justice and environmental concerns can cohere, and that the key to that coherence is a proper understanding of the limits and the possibilities of nature, and of building societies on the basis of nature. This conviction is not simple. Worster argues that society needs to respect nature's limits *and* its integrity. And he argues that any society worthy of America's democratic promise also has to pursue social justice. At one point in his career, I think, he would have argued that the former produces the latter, but this is not the message of *A River Running West.* In Worster's new book, Powell eventually pursues social justice, but not environ-

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mental integrity. In the nineteenth century as in the twenty-first century, those who recognize the one and those who recognize the other are not very often the same people. Where Stegner made things simple by uniting them in Powell, Worster, by revealing Powell's conflicts, makes things difficult.

Worster is far too good a historian to lecture or to scold his subject, but he does engage Powell and he certainly does argue with him. He sympathizes with Powell as an intelligent man in love with the same country that Worster loves. Yet Worster's dispute with Powell over the relation between nature and justice becomes the deep theme of the second half of the book, as the flawed hero comes to Washington, D.C. in 1879 and takes control of the two most powerful scientific bureaucracies. The U.S. Geological Survey and the Bureau of American Ethnology gave Powell control over the science of the Earth and the science of man, and the hope of bringing "the American nation to redemption and greatness." Powell the bureaucrat remained Powell the intellectual in a nineteenth-century way that is almost impossible to imagine now. His intellectual life urgently mattered: it was at the root of his inability to conceive of nature in a way that could link social justice and environmental integrity.

The intellectual life that revolved around the Powell Survey and the USGS produced two large works that were more philosophy and sociology than science. Only intellectual historians of the nineteenth century now read Lester Ward's *Dynamic Sociology*, which was published in 1883, and not even they read Powell's *Truth and Error, or the Science of Intellection*, which appeared in 1898. Ward, a biologist, began with a vision of nature as an entity that lacked thought, idea, plan, or purpose, and thus could never serve as a model for human society. Society stood apart from nature, and human rationality and science, rightly applied for the common good instead of private greed, could secure social progress. This severing of society from nature is the equivalent of original sin for Worster, but he approves of Ward's social analysis. In the context of its time, Ward's book was an attack on Herbert Spencer's naturalization of capitalism.

Many of Powell's popular essays echoed Ward's core beliefs. Powell viewed the world through nineteenth-century ideas of humanity's slow progress to civilization. History was the gradual triumph of science and scientific thinking. And as science extended its domain further and further into the realm of ethics, egotism and selfishness would give way to altruism. The laws of natural evolution were not the laws of social evolution, and, in Worster's paraphrase of Powell, "the war for survival must give way to a war on nature." Powell declared that man had "organized a new kingdom of matter over which he rules ... the powers of nature are his servants, and the granite earth his throne."

RAISING THE BANNER of science, Powell marched into the irrigation wars once more, this time in a disastrous alliance with Senator William Stewart of Nevada, who packed into his ample frame nearly every Gilded Age cliché. He was as ruthless as he was corrupt, as arrogant as he was rich, as shrewd as he was ignorant. With the encouragement of Stewart, who had made irrigating the West his pet issue, Powell launched an irrigation survey. Imagining the West as a mosaic of interconnected watersheds, he identified a natural pattern that should serve as the basis for a social pattern. "The plan," Powell wrote, "is to establish a local self-government by hydrographic basins." Each was to be "a commonwealth within itself."

But Powell failed to grasp the implications of his own insight. The survey was still essentially a search for the best sites for dams that would plug every rivulet in the West, allowing no drop to go to waste. The water would stay within the watershed and under the control of the people within the watershed. Powell's plan, following Mexican and Mormon models, was "to establish local self-government by hydrographic basins." Its plan for community control of water was hostile to capitalist development of basic resources. Social justice would be served, but not nature, which remained purely instrumental.

In Powell's plan, water would flow through natural channels only as long as those channels conveyed it to fields requiring irrigation. All the other things in the world that made use of water would have to shift as they might. Powell was not the environmentalist-in-waiting that Stegner made him out to be; the strands of social justice and environmentalism were kept apart by the "unresolved conflicts in his thinking." As Worster notes, "he called for the liberation of humanity from the constraints imposed by nature but then turned around to advocate a sense of natural limits, a skepticism toward industrial progress, and a populist program of agrarian democracy."

It is Powell's contradictions that allow Worster to insert himself into Powell's world. If the problem consists merely in conflicts in thinking, then the historian can literally step into his own history, point out the resolutions, and raise the banner anew. And this is what Worster does. Powell is not the only lapsed Christian in this book. Worster is as powerful a presence as Powell himself, trying to unite through authorial will and prophetic exhortation what his subject failed to bring together. This is an imaginative, even brilliant use of history; but it has its problems.

Worster ends the book with an eloquent account of the historical changes that separate us from Powell. We are a different people now, but the nature of the arid West is still our nature. One of the things that gives Worster's work its force, while making it at times so puzzling as history, is his refusal to historicize certain things. The very fact that we are embedded in nature means that it changes along with us, and if it changes with our actions, it cannot be a constant and separate oracle guiding those actions. There remains the disturbing possibility that Powell might have been right: that natural systems do not provide a very good or clear guide for social systems. And there is an even more disturbing possibility: if he was wrong then, he might be right now, because of the extent to which we have altered nature.

IV.

THE REFUSAL TO historicize as relentlessly as he might also colors Worster's treatment of Indian peoples. One of the great strengths of his book is its attention to the large role that Powell played, through the Bureau of American Ethnology, in creating a body of work that is still critical to American anthropology. The peoples whom Worster discusses in most detail—the Utes, the Paiutes, the Navajos, the Zunis, the Hopis—had been in contact with Europeans for three centuries or more by the time Powell met them. They might not yet have been modern peoples, but they were a product of the clashes that modernity brought.

The conversation between Worster and Powell over the treatment of nature is a give-and-take; the discussion of Indians is more of a duet. Needless to say, Worster does not accept the nineteenth-century formula of a lockstep march of all cultures from savagery through barbarism to civilization that Powell adopted from Lewis Morgan. Yet Worster writes rather unproblematically about "traditional tribes—true native cultures as unaffected by white influence as possible"—even as his specific examples, such as the Navajos, who were not yet a "tribe" and who were deeply influenced by contact with whites, render the terms problematic. It is sometimes unclear whether Worster is speaking for Powell or for himself. Since his own criticisms and questions are very clear in

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other places, it is troubling that they are ambiguous when Powell unproblematically sees Indian choices as between an unchanging tradition and a homogenous Americanism.

ELIZA MCFEELY'S *Zuni and the American Imagination*, an elegant little book, takes up the careers of some of the people who served under Powell in the Bureau of American Ethnology. Her book has the unnecessary burden of a grand and deceptive title: it is about neither the Zunis themselves nor the American imagination, which she gestures toward rather than really examines. It is really about how the Zuni Pueblo was incorporated into the United States "not so much by conquerors as collectors," who re-created it as a mirror in which Americans might see themselves. What Americans saw, however, is notoriously hard to retrieve; and it is much easier to re-create what those who presented Zuni to the public meant them to see. And so McFeely is taken up with three ethnologists—Matilda Stevenson, Frank Hamilton Cushing, and Stewart Culin—who worked at Zuni Pueblo in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Stevenson and Cushing worked for the Bureau of American Ethnology, and their work was a part of Powell's grand theorizing.

These ethnologists arrived at Zuni knowing the big picture. The Zunis, with their town, agriculture, elaborate religion, and crafts, could stand in for human culture in its barbaric phase. They were the distant past sitting in the middle of nineteenth-century America. Stevenson, Cushing, and Culin went there looking for the details of the human evolutionary past—the stages through which all cultures supposedly evolved. Cushing wanted "to re-create lost patterns of thought"; Stevenson wanted "to record what she thought were the dying social practices of a doomed people"; Culin wanted to collect the objects that Zunis created. In search of the universal, they all became fascinated in one way or another with the peculiarities of Zuni, and they took possession of the Zunis by taking their stories, their symbols, their tools, and their ritual objects.

These ethnologists shared with Powell not only a conception of science as a physical as well as an intellectual adventure, but also a desire to communicate their knowledge to a larger public. Cushing in particular reinvented himself as a Zuni and then used Zuni stories and rituals as the raw material for his own creations. But beyond the silliness that sometime plagued Cushing's presentation of himself was the serious question of insider/outsider understandings and the ability to move between them that has long obsessed anthropologists.

McFeely presents the dilemma through Cushing without really grappling with it, portraying him as an attractive example of early ethnological arrogance and wrongheadedness. Cushing imagined that there existed a universal human mind and a universal human experience. To understand Zunis, he had only to enter into the structural conditions of Zuni and put his mind to work. He presented himself as "better at understanding the Zunis than the Zunis themselves."

ONCE THE THEORY of universal stages collapses, Cushing appears to have merely been deluded. But what disappears with the theory whose demise McFeely traces? Is the ability to cross cultural lines, and to find more than just yourself on the other side, a delusion? Anthropology might have invented the Zunis, but it also invented culture, and in so doing did it create a series of abstract boxes in which to imprison our understanding of a much more fluid and hybrid set of experiences that actually make up human life? These are all questions with which anthropologists have been famously struggling, and which the experiences of these American ethnologists open up.

McFeely only sporadically addresses these questions, aiming instead at easier targets. Her targets are not unimportant, and she hits them as well as anyone, but they have been hit before. She nicely analyzes early museums in terms of American society's search for order and hierarchy, in which things arranged and labeled made the larger, messier world seem structured and comprehensible. The more their own world fragmented, the more the ethnologists and the curators sought to put the fragments back together in the safe confines of the museums. Obtaining Indian stuff to put in museums was important because the Indian present was the universal human past. The museums provided a rationale that made the collection of Indian stuff—whether or not Indian peoples were willing to surrender it—seem necessary and proper. And get the stuff Cushing, Stevenson, and Culin certainly did, bullying their way into kivas, looting shrines (or purchasing goods from those who looted them), and offering payment to women and children in exchange for sacred objects owned by absent men. They did this not because they despised the Zunis, but because they believed that the Zunis already had a foot in the grave, and they wanted to preserve them. They designated themselves, not the Zunis, as the keepers of Zuni memory—the common memory of humanity, as they saw it.

Yet for all their arrogance and their fatuous certainties, there was another side to their enterprise. Cushing lost his position for opposing the son-in-law of a powerful senator who was attempting to rob the Zunis of what Powell knew was the most precious resource of the region: water. Powell sacrificed him to keep the bureau's funding. If Cushing was a robber, then, he was a complicated robber who defended the Zunis at some personal cost against other robbers. Matilda Stevenson's benevolence was heavy-handed and condescending, but some Zunis, particularly We'wha, apparently found ways to use it for their own purposes. (We'wha was the most famous of the Zuni *berdache*, who formed a third gender among the Zunis. They were men who dressed and lived as women and mediated between men and women.) We'wha and Stevenson, McFeely believes, developed a genuine friendship and partnership.

IT IS EASY enough to use history to trace delusions, or to use American adventures among Indians to show that the adventurers saw only what they brought with them; and it is fashionable now to see cross-cultural experiences as artificial and simulated. But this leaves the authors serving the very simulations they expose. McFeely recognizes the simulation, but she has to give it center stage, because what else is there to provide? The more interesting subtext of her book is that something else happened at Zuni, but this is relegated to the wings. McFeely emphasizes that there are real Zunis and that their communal life did not end at the dawn of the twentieth century. She knows, too, that like other Indian peoples, Zunis now use these old BAE reports to reintroduce older practices and understandings into their ceremonies and lives. They see something there besides the solipsism of early ethnology.

McFeely knows that at some level there was a common life, no matter how unequal and difficult, between these ethnologists and the Zunis. But this is not the main thread that she pursues. She concludes by explaining how anthropologists, despite their differences, continued to create a Zuni that existed in American books, museums, and imaginations, "unhinged in space but stuck in time," and how they came to be mirrors in which viewers could see themselves. All right, so they did. But this is not all that happened. The great virtue of Worster's book—the tone that will probably cost it readers—is that it tries to grapple with all sides of a multifaceted engagement with the world. McFeely, no matter how ably, grapples seriously with only one. ■

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continued from page 6
killings of African Americans by police a national priority.

JEFFREY IAN ROSS
Assistant Professor
Division of Criminology, Criminal Justice, and Social Policy
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Baltimore, Maryland

Inflamed

TO THE EDITORS:

Your bash note to me (Notebook, May 7) turns a blind eye to the campus totalitarians who tried to suppress my reparations ad, and to the race baiters who defamed me in order to discredit views that a majority of THE NEW REPUBLIC's readers would probably agree with. It portrays me as a hypocritical, publicity-seeking provocateur who has compounded even these sins by trying to suppress a conservative writer named Evan Gahr solely because Gahr disagreed with him. As if this were not enough, TNR concludes by accusing me of smearing Gahr gratuitously and thus being a McCarthyite myself.

Every item of this indictment is falsely presented or just plain made-up.

There is nothing especially "inflammatory" about my ad. Or does TNR think that reparations 136 years after the fact—wrung from recent Mexican immigrants, among others, and paid to African Americans who were never slaves and who may be better off than those being asked to pay them—is a *good* idea? In the second place, how does TNR know the response to my ad was a result I "calculated"? I had published a virtually identical piece, making the same arguments, in *Salon.com* nine months earlier without any repercussions at all. Not one of my liberal editors thought my words "inflammatory" when I submitted them. Why would I know that placing a few ads in college papers would produce thuggish demonstrations, the theft of newspapers, and a nationwide smear campaign against me? Which TNR now joins.

I did not try to silence Gahr, who is a Nader supporter, not a conservative. (I posted his stupid piece *twice* on my site at *www.frontpagemagazine.com*.) Nor did I fire him (he was not on my staff). Nor was I the aggressor in calling him "demented." It was his phrase that I turned around.

DAVID HOROWITZ
Editor-in-Chief
FrontPageMagazine.com
Los Angeles, California

THE EDITORS REPLY:

We did not argue that opposing reparations is inherently inflammatory (of course it isn't) but that David Horowitz made the argument in an inflammatory way—writing, for instance, that blacks benefited from slavery. ("American blacks *on average* enjoy per capita incomes in the range of twenty to *fifty* times that of blacks living in any of the African nations from which they were kidnapped.") We can't prove that Horowitz was aware that publishing his screed in campus papers would produce the result it did. Maybe he was actually surprised the first time campus leftists railed against him and then continually surprised when it continued to happen, time after time. If so, we underestimated Horowitz's sincerity and overestimated his attentiveness.

As for Evan Gahr, he's as conservative as they come, having worked for right-leaning foundations and written for conservative organs like *The American Spectator* and *The Washington Times*. And Horowitz is disingenuous when he says he did not silence Gahr. The two times Horowitz "posted" Gahr's article consisted of a link in Horowitz's rebuttal and an advertisement paid for by Gahr—both of which came after Gahr embarrassed Horowitz for spiking his story. Horowitz's saying he did not fire Gahr is also disingenuous: Gahr may not have been on his staff, but he was a regular contributor. In Horowitz's own words: "[H]is columns are no longer welcome in *FrontPage Magazine*." ■

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Stray

THEY CAME LIKE GOD'S WELL-coiffed soldiers, in two tank-like SUVs advancing down the narrow, trash-strewn alley behind my row house in Columbia Heights. I had never seen women like them in my neighborhood, which lies on the more dangerous side of 16th Street—the dividing line between Washington, D.C.'s richer, whiter west and its poorer, blacker east. They were white and middle-aged, wearing pressed khakis and colorful turtlenecks, with a righteous certainty that seemed to repel the possibility they could be harmed. They were volunteers, they explained. They had come from the suburb of Arlington, Virginia, to assist the less fortunate, bring them sustenance, and ease their suffering. Or, as one of the women told me: "We're here to feed your stray cats."

SPOONING CANNED FOOD ONTO PAPER plates, the women hoped to lure stray cats into cages and eventually find homes for them. They not only failed; they failed miserably, spending the better part of an hour fattening up a calico before it sauntered away behind a dumpster.

IN ANOTHER NEIGHBORHOOD, THIS unsuccessful feline-improvement project might have seemed like an act of genuine compassion. But in Columbia Heights it suggested an ostentatious disregard for the human suffering all around. Ravaged by the riots of 1968, Columbia Heights has yet to fully recover. Houses and businesses gutted by fire have never been reopened. And although the crack epidemic that raged through the city in the 1980s and early '90s has abated, last year's tally of this district's homicides (42), sexual assaults (67), robberies (716), and aggravated assaults (806) reveals a substantial increase since 1999. I'm reminded of these statistics even inside my house. At night I often hear the pah, pah, pah of gunfire, and I've been awakened many times by the whirring of a low-flying police helicopter blasting its searchlight into my bedroom. In the same alley where the women were trying to rescue cats, I've seen a prostitute servicing her client. And, early one evening not long ago, I watched a policeman aim his gun at a man standing smack in the middle of my backyard.

I WAS ANNOYED BY THE CAT RESCUERS' indifference to their surroundings. But I also disliked them because they reminded me how much my life has changed since I moved here. I grew up in a quiet suburb of Cincinnati, surrounded by watchful neighbors and well-manicured lawns, a world apart from Columbia Heights. Yet while talking with the cat rescuers, I realized how much I'd come to feel a part of this neighborhood. These women, who looked much like my neighbors in Cincinnati, were only visiting; Columbia Heights was my home. I'd initially thought I would stay only a few months and then move to a nearby suburb where I would feel more comfortable. But that was almost two years ago. Lately, as I've prepared to move back to Ohio, I've thought about what has kept me in the neighborhood so much longer than I'd anticipated. Part of it, of course, is the ridiculously low rent. But I've also stayed here, strangely enough, because it offers so little comfort.

LIVING IN COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, I'VE worried about being robbed, propositioned, assaulted, or simply ignored by the man blasting his car stereo outside my window in the ugly hours before dawn. Yet I've also grown addicted to this feeling, to the steady exhilaration that comes from living among such ubiquitous illegality. This isn't macho; it's perverse. But I imagine it's akin to the feeling some war correspondents have for the war they're covering: a queer mixture of disgust and elation. They want the war to end, yet they feel let down when it's over. I know that, as much as I dislike finding smashed beer bottles on my front walk in the morning, I'll miss them when I leave. Like any war zone, this place provides compelling stories—stories about obnoxious neighbors, murdered students, cars robbed for loose change on the dashboard, and junkies skulking through alleys like the living dead.

AN ADDICTION OF THIS SORT HAS CONsequences. It has probably made me more suspicious and truculent. But it has also made me more humble: Nowadays if I see someone leaning out his bedroom window shouting angrily at people below, or running barefoot and shirtless through the street just to scream at a passing car, I no longer feel disdain or condescension. Of course, that may be simply because in recent months I have done both these things myself.

IN TRUTH, I'VE DONE A LOT OF THINGS here that I would never have dreamed of doing in the suburbs—precisely because this *isn't* the suburbs. People here live in much closer proximity, in rented houses and rooms, many of them working odd shifts or not at all. Significantly, there is no shared understanding about what constitutes noise pollution. Which is why, not long ago, I found myself awakened at 7:30 every morning by a woman in a white sedan, honking her horn persistently as she idled outside my neighbor's house. Most mornings I lay in bed fuming; other times I flung myself halfway out my window to scream at her until she left. Finally, one day I leaped out of bed, pulled on a pair of pants, and made it onto the street just in time to run behind her car for 50 yards, bellowing into the plume of its exhaust.

DESPERATE, I CALLED THE POLICE. I told them the approximate time the white car arrived each day, and felt enormously grateful when, the following morning, a cruiser sat waiting on the corner of my street. I stood on the porch, watching the policemen drink their morning coffee, waiting for the woman in the sedan to appear. We waited, and waited, until it was nearly 8 a.m. Finally, the cops shrugged their shoulders, said they'd try to come back later, and drove away. I was back upstairs in my bedroom when I heard the horn—a long, unmistakable, droning bleat. I stared out my window at the car, wondering whether I would have time to make it outside before she pulled away. But that very moment a thin man with a ragged goatee burst from his house across the street wearing only pajama bottoms. He strode over to the car and demanded that the woman roll down her window. "Look up there!" he shouted at her, pointing to the second floor of his house. "My wife and child live in that room, and every morning you wake us up with your fucking horn!" The woman nodded, smirking at him while taking a long drag on her cigarette. Then the man reached into his pajamas, pulled out a foghorn, and blew it directly into her car. Shrieking and batting madly at the foghorn, the woman gunned her car down the street.

WATCHING THIS SCENE OF URBAN aggression, I felt none of the suburbanite's contempt. In truth, I felt something closer to rapture at the rough justice unfolding before my eyes. Before I leave, I'd like to do something positive for this neighborhood that has done so much to broaden my understanding of human nature. We have an enormous number of rats around here. Maybe I could import some stray cats.

BRIAN GROH

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